

The Boy who Lived, lived no more. Wizarding and Muggle Britain were thrown together in a tangle of murder, fear, tears and cruelty.

Having died at the hands of Lord Voldemort, the boy who lived, a symbol for all those who resisted the dark lord and his followers, any resistance failed and many order members and DA members went into hiding underground while Voldemort went on a rampage.

Killing muggles were not enough anymore; forcing them under wizard rule was more satisfying when The Dark Lord heard parents screaming for their children as they were separated into different camps specially set up for muggles; hearing their tortured screams from behind the walls of the camp as he walked the now completely deserted streets of London.

Of course Europe and America had tried to help, muggle and Wizard alike. However as Voldemort had removed the secrecy of state the wizarding world had gone global and now each country themselves were having to deal with the mistrust and violence that the new revelation had brought.

Some places had treaties but these were fair and few between. The muggles didn't understand magic and after glancing what was going on in Britain from the tabloids you could hardly blame them. Most wizards abroad wanted peace though the violence that was slowly erupting began to pick away at any desire as the muggles misunderstanding and refusal to learn about wizarding kind just added to Wizard's view that muggles shouldn't be trusted.

So it was Britain for the most part was left alone under the tyrannical reign of Lord Voldemort.

Lucius Malfoy became minister of magic, sitting in the office all day doing the work that Voldemort thought beneath him. New laws were put into practice: mudbloods were sold into slavery to the pure-blooded families; pure bloods themselves had special privileges such as top ministry officials; Hogwarts teachers and power in abundance.

Hogwarts itself was now a school for training death eaters with a few of the old subjects remaining such as Transfiguration, Flying, Ancient Runes, Astronomy and Care for Magical Creatures. Though these subjects, which used to be compulsory with the exception of Transfiguration, were all compulsory as the Dark Lord saw that the earlier students were taught the more powerful they would be in future.

The ministry itself made some huge changes in the Hogwarts curriculum system as well:

History of Magic was now officially History about famous pure bloods; Blood Studies was a compulsory subject up to OWLS where memorizing family trees and pure blood propaganda was taught.

Muggle Studies and Dark Arts, compulsory up to NEWT Level, taught of the scum that was muggles as well as Dark curses the Dark Lord specifically requested.

As well as this only half bloods or purebloods were allowed to attend thus making Slytherin the more dominant house as well as classes a lot smaller so all houses were able to take classes together.

The punishment system was changed drastically as well, changing a night's detention doing work that would benefit the school to Victorian Corporal Punishment. As well as Dark curses the cane was used regularly, usually on the hands and the 'Professors' took a sick twisted delight in torturing the pupils (with the exception of Slytherin house of course). Being denied food for certain periods was another favourite among the more sick members of the staff.

Voldemort allowed the houses to stay in place as he didn't want the Slytherins to share their common room with 'common filth', such as half bloods.

Rodolphus Lestrange was placed as head master and it was he, along with Lucius Malfoy that brought in these 'changes'.

All in all Britain had become a very dark place where no one would dare to speak out for fear of saying the wrong thing to the wrong person and making their families targets.

Voldemort himself kept to the shadows for the most part, only being seen by his death eaters. This in itself created an air of uncertainty that over the years since our late hero died began to grow and fester.

Our story starts in Hogwarts itself on a rainy Monday morning fifteen years to the day that Harry Potter and his friends died at the Hand of Voldemort.

It starts with a young fourteen year old girl named Josie Burns, a half blood and a Gryffindor.

It was this particular Monday Morning that Josie Burns was woken up rather rudely by her best friend and room mate Adonia Osborne who was sporting a large nasty cut on her cheek which hadn't been there yesterday.

Detention last night had evidently been bad.

"Josie, wake up. We're going to be late for Transfiguration."

Josie dragged herself out of bed and yawned,

"Calm down, there's always breakfast first," Josie yawned while dragging her crumpled robes over her head,

"No there isn't. You slept through it. We have fifteen minutes to get to Transfiguration."

Josie felt alarm course through her body and quickly finished dressing and dragged a brush through her hair before picking up her book bag and wand and running down the stairs, across the deserted common room and through the portrait hole and down towards the Transfiguration classroom where they slipped into their seats minutes before the bell rang.

The door to Professor Lestrange's office was thrown open and silence impressively descended into the classroom within a second.

Tall, dark and imposing Bellatrix Black Lestrange marched into the classroom and sat at her desk and began to call out the register.

After that was done she turned to a small blue eyed Hufflepuff boy,  
"Bones, take in the homework," she barked at him.

The boy, Trevor Bones, stood up and hurriedly went around the classroom taking in homework.

When he got to Josie he found that she was searching frantically through her bag,

"Where is it? I know I had it?" she was whispering frantically.

Adonia was helping her look while Trevor stood by looking worried.

A large shadow fell over the girls and both froze,

"Miss Burns? Do you have the homework I set you last week?" Bellatrix asked in a false sickly voice.

"It's here somewhere, ma'am. I...I...did do it..."

"Then where is it?" Bellatrix asked in the same fake voice.

Suddenly Josie had a flashback: her finishing it in the common room and forgetting to put it in her bag, intending to pick it up the next day. Only she was in such a rush this morning she forgot.

"It...It's in the....common room."

"Being in the common room in no use to me, is it Burns?" Bellatrix had now crouched down and spoke in a completely calm, almost puzzled voice which Josie recognized as the calm before the storm.

The class had now gone completely silent, the Ravenclaws, Hufflepuffs and Griffindors waiting for Bellatrix to blow while the Slytherins were eagerly awaiting what punishment would befall the O So Stupid One who had forgotten her homework

“N...no Ma’am.” Standing up abruptly Bellatrix turned on her heel and walked back to the front of the room,

“Detention tonight Burns. Seven o’clock, my office.”

“Y...Yes ma’am,” Josie stuttered.

The rest of the lesson passed uneventfully, thankfully, and when the bell rang Josie hurried out with Adonia next to her,

“Muggle Studies next. Please tell me you have your homework for that?” Adonia asked.

Josie checked her bag and after a heart stopping moment found that she had.

The muggle studies classroom was situated on the fifth floor and it took most of their fifteen minute break to push and shove through the throng of students to get up there.

Sitting down Alecto Carrow came out of her office and waved her wand at the board.

Immediately words appeared,

“Now repeat these words after me: Muggles are filth.”

“Muggles are filth,” the class replied in a monotone.

“Again,” Carrow snarled, “and mean it this time.”

“Muggles are filth,” the class intoned, some people making a visual effort to try and change their tone.

Alecto walked up and down the class, collecting homework and forcing them to repeat it by themselves and dishing out threats of punishment if they didn't meet her standards.

Coming up to Josie and Adonia she collected their homework in and forced each girl to repeat the words on the board in turn.

Josie, unfortunately, froze up. There was always something about Alecto Carrow that frightened her more than the other teachers and having her here, glaring down at her made the words freeze in her throat,

“M...mugs...” Alecto made a face of disgust before slapping Josie hard across the face, making a resounding crack that echoed in throughout the classroom,

“Again girl,”

“Muggles are filth,” she forced out.

Alecto glared at her and Josie instinctively knew what was coming. Being a half blood getting three detentions in one day was not uncommon, though somehow she had managed to avoid the worst of the Teachers wrath by keeping her head down and her marks up.

This was going to be a long and painful week,

“Detention Burns, tonight.”

“Can’t ma’am,” Josie could, and would, never call any of the teachers ‘Professor’.

They were not worthy of the title.

Alecto turned round, her face a picture of thunder.

“Excuse me?” Josie took a deep breath, reminded herself she was in Gryffindor and looked Alecto straight in the face,

“I have a detention with Lestrange tonight, ma’am.” It was only when she had said it that she realised that she hadn’t addressed Bellatrix with ‘respect’

“Detention for the next two nights, then: one for your lack of enthusiasm and the other for your cheek towards Professor Lestrange.”

Turning round with a satisfied smirk on her face she made her way towards the blackboard where she turned to the class and began to rant about muggles with the class hurriedly scribbling down notes.

It was only twenty minutes later when Alecto was grilling a Ravenclaw boy while insulting his intelligence that Josie felt it safe to let her mind drift as she looked around.

The muggles studies classroom was quite small and claustrophobic with cages hanging down from the ceiling, some with actual muggles in them used for demonstration.

After four years Josie had got used to the sobbing and barely paid it any mind as she knew she couldn’t do anything, at least not with Alecto in the room.

Josie thought on her day.

Three detentions and it wasn’t even lunchtime yet! Fab! Of course it could be worse, she supposed, it could be Wednesday and she could have a detention with Nott and the other Lestrange, Rabastan to be more specific.

As bad as Bellatrix was; Nott was worse, preferring to ‘surprise’ the student, which you never got used to while somehow Josie had got used to the Cruciatus; Bellatrix’s favourite method.

Though the way her luck was going she wouldn’t be surprised if she got detention in her last two classes as well as each class she had for the rest of the week. That would book her up for the next four weeks, making her rely heavily on her study periods on Saturdays to keep her homework up.

The bell rang and after been given homework the students swarmed out of the classroom like bees swarming towards a hive.

"Just Care of Magical Creatures and Ancient Runes left to go; please, please don't get another detention."

Josie was suddenly really annoyed with her best friend and turned on her,

"You think I want three detentions? That it is my fault they hate me purely because I'm only half blood? You're a pureblood Adonia, you wouldn't understand."

Josie began to turn away with tears in her eyes but Adonia grabbed her,

"I'm sorry Jose, I....I didn't mean it like that. Your right, I'm sorry," Adonia finished, letting go of Josie and looking at her feet.

Josie took a deep breath and nodded and together they walked into the great hall for lunch.

Sitting down and pressing their thumbs, aka their magical signature, onto the plates which magically filled with the amount of food they were allowed: a small dollop of shepherds pie and a few scatters of vegetables and half a glass of water.

Adonia next to her got considerably more but then it was common knowledge that the Slytherins got more than anyone, then the pure bloods, then the half-bloods and finally those who were considered blood traitors.

Finishing her measly lunch just as the bell rang both girls trekked outside down to the forbidden forest where 'Professor' McNair had a tied up centaur lying motionless in a pen, a trickle of blood running down his face.

With a sinking heart Josie realised it was going to be a very long afternoon.

The next day Josie was sitting in the great hall eating her mediocre breakfast and trying to make it last when a sudden chill entered the hall, making the few people who were chattering fall silent. Heads swivelled to the entrance where the headmaster, Bellatrix and two large black cloaked dementors stood looking menacing.

Walking into the now silent hall they approached the Gryffindor table to where Jason O'Connell, a half blood and good friend of Josie's, sat.

"Jason O'Connell?" Rodolphus asked, his voice, although not raised, seemed to vibrate around the room.

"Y...Yes sir?"

"You are under arrest for lying about your parentage and faking your family tree to not only gain admittance into the prestigious school of Hogwarts but also to rise above your proper station in life as a muggle in servitude. Take him away," Rodolphus finished to the dementors.

Two large scabby blackened hands grabbed Jason, holding him cruelly tight as their despair washed over him and he collapsed.

A few Griffindors stood up in protest, Josie one of them. A small voice at the back of her head was screaming at her to sit down but her feelings of outrage overrode her common sense.

"You can't do this!"

Had that been her? Oh crap!

Rodolphus head snapped round towards her direction and it was a show of her courage that she didn't wilt under his lethal gaze.

Maybe if she had cowed away things might have turned out differently but she didn't.

Flashes of memory brought about by the dementors came to the forefront of her mind.

Two years old and watching her mother scream and cry as Death Eaters broke into their house to take away her father, a muggle born wizard.

“He’s a half blood. His dad is a wizard. O’Connell is an old wizarding name,” she shouted at Rodolphus

Mouth, shut up

Her first detention in her first week of starting Hogwarts: she had never known how bad the Cruciatus had been, with Bellatrix laughing insanely over her.

“You can’t arrest him you inbred scum.”

Merlin, had that been her?

SLAP!

Josie went flying across the room from the impact of the slap Bellatrix delivered.

Suddenly Rodolphus was standing over her, his face a picture of thunder.

“I think, Miss Burns, that you don’t know your place; two weeks detention starting tonight and a hundred points from Gryffindor...”

“Headmaster, Burns here already has two detentions with me tonight and tomorrow,” Alecto Carrow put in helpfully.

Josie only heard part of this, her vision and head were swimming from the impact of the slap.

“Then Alecto, I will relieve you of your punishments tonight and deal with her myself. I do not like to be questioned Burns, especially not from a filthy mongrel half blood like you.”

Grabbing her by the back of her neck and, yanking her up, Rodolphus pushed her towards Bellatrix,

“Take her up to my office my dear, and wait for me there.”

Bellatrix grinned and started dragging Josie forcefully towards the door,

“Bellatrix!” Bellatrix turned round, “No playing with her; just watching her. Go on, my pet.” The grin on Bellatrix faded and she didn’t move, “Now Bellatrix.” The headmaster’s tone had hardened and Bellatrix dragged Josie unmercifully up toward the stone gargoyle where she spat the word,

“Vert.” The gargoyle jumped aside to reveal a spirally staircase that was slowly making its way upwards like an escalator.

Josie for her part was nearly wetting herself from fear. She had never been punished by the headmaster himself before; that only happened to the regular offenders.

Why wasn’t her mouth connected to her brain? Why did she have to speak out? Why did she have to be such a hero? Did she regret it though, she asked herself, and the simple answer was no, she did not regret anything. Despite her fear she was glad she had stood up to the headmaster. But did she really have to call him an inbred scum?

Bellatrix pushed her into the small circular room whose walls were decorated a deep green with silver diamonds. The walls were lined with shelves piled high with books on blood purity and dark arts.

A large heavy dark mahogany desk stood opposite the door with a large cushy green velvet chair behind it

Behind the desk on another shelf were a variety of torture instruments and the sorting hat. Chains were hanging off the wall onto her right.

Josie swallowed the lump that was forming in her throat, her original fear taking over as the adrenaline slowly began to subside from her veins.

Bellatrix chained her up against the wall roughly, muttering under her breath about her husband.

Finishing, Bellatrix took a step back and just looked at Josie with those cold insane eyes that sent shivers up Josie's spine.

After fifteen minutes had passed Josie didn't think she could stand Bellatrix staring at her anymore and it was then that the door was thrown open and Rodolphus strode in, a long thin metal tipped whip in his hand, currently coiled in on itself.

"You may leave my pet. I won't take long." The 'my pet' wasn't said as a term of endearment, more a claim of ownership and Bellatrix pouted in a sulky way at being denied her fun before storming out, slamming the door loudly.

Now it was Rodolphus's turn to stare at Josie.

Josie was not a regular offender; in-fact she hadn't gotten more than twenty five detentions since starting Hogwarts four years ago which was strange for a half blood; the teachers had even said how she would make a good death eater as her marks were reasonably high and she didn't speak out of turn very often.

So why she had done so now was beyond him.

Rodolphus decided to scare her into submission. He decided this was probably a one off and after he was done with her she would realise what a mistake she had made and would be begging for his forgiveness which he would graciously give before sending her off for two weeks worth of detention with Nott.

That should ensure no more bad behaviour.

Crack!

The steel tipped whip snaked out and slashed her across her already bruised face leaving a small shallow cut which began to bleed.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

Three more, deeper cuts appeared along her neck.

Placing the whip down he took out his wand and, pointing it at one of the cuts he had made said,

“Attero”

Screaming as the cuts deepened and the skin around them began to erode Rodolphus only stopped the curse when the skin round her neck was blackened and burnt looking.

“Crucio.” He held the curse on her for a full minute as she lay withering and screaming, still chained up by her wrists, half on the floor; her muscles doing wired spasms.

Taking off the curse he watched her as she lay sobbing hysterically on the floor.

Let it be over soon, please let it be over, she thought frantically.

Five more Cruciatus’s later and she was begging for him to stop.

Unchaining her and crouching down so they were on eye level he spoke in a deadly voice,

“I don’t like back-talkers Burns, especially from mongrels like you. Though as this your first offence with me I shall let you off lightly by not punishing you anymore.”

Josie’s heart nearly stopped beating from shock at these words as hope slowly bloomed in her only to be dashed away cruelly by his next words,

“However Professor Nott, your head of house, expressed some interest in ensuring your...behaviour is up to standards and as he is an expert in the matter I shall leave it up to him.

“Your detentions will go on for two weeks and if I hear from the staff after this that there has been so much as a peep from you, you will on your way to Azkaban for a life long sentence faster than you can say Kelpie. Understand?”

“Y...Yes sir.”

“Good. Now, get out of my sight.” Standing up and turning towards his desk as Josie half crawled half ran towards the door and stumbled down the steps just as the bell rang.

Having missed Blood Studies Josie made her way towards the dungeons where Potions was taken.

Taking her seat at the back she waited for Adonia who came soon enough.

“Oh Merlin Jose, your neck...”

Josie shrugged but immediately regretted it as a burning pain shot up from her neck to her head; making her eyes water.

“Two weeks detention with Nott,” she whispered as more students filed into the room. “But what about Jason?”

“They took him. Oh Josie, they took him away.” And she broke down in tears.

Truly, Josie hadn’t expected her own outburst to have made any difference but somehow hearing that Jason had been arrested made her blood turn cold as it made it more real.

The door flew open and Snape walked in doing his perfect imitation of an overgrown bat.

"Miss Osborne, please cease your tears now as they are neither appropriate nor constructive," Snape's sneering voice came her way.

Adonia choked but managed to hold her tears back as Snape started going on about a shrinking potion that they were going to do.

"The instructions are of the board. You may work in pairs. Proceed."

Adonia, still choking back sobs, lit the fire underneath the cauldron while Josie, trying not to move her neck as even the slight movement reduced her to eye watering pain, started chopping up the snake's stomach for the potion.

Because of her pain and inability to prepare the ingredients right the potion turned bright pink instead of the blue it was meant to be.

Snape took one glance, vanished it and gave them both a zero and a two foot long essay on how to prepare a simple shrinking solution.

The rest of the day flew by and seven o'clock came around to quickly for Josie's liking.

The detention itself was made worse by the pain in her neck which, she had been told by a sixth year, whom was learning that particular curse in Dark Arts, would scar badly.

It was way past midnight when she dragged herself, bleeding and bruised, back to the deserted common room where she was surprised to see Adonia sitting alone in one of the larger armchairs near the fire.

"It's not fair Jose," she said before Josie could remark on her still up, "It's not fair how they removed Jason just because he was a half blood; it's not fair how you got tortured beyond endurance just because you stood up and gave your opinion. It isn't fair how muggleborns have to serve purebloods when they should have an education as well, it isn't fair how muggles are kept pent up in cages or camps..." she broke off on a sob and Josie came over to comfort her.

This however only made her break down more as the suppressed tears over the last fourteen years came pouring out,

“It’s not fair, It’s not fair,” she kept on repeating.

Something inside Josie snapped as she watched her usually strong best friend reduced to such a state by psychopaths called Death Eaters.

“Then we should do something about it.” Looking back Josie couldn’t believe she had said it, could barely remember it, even. It was as if somehow something had taken her original frightened mind and replaced it with a new courageous moral driven one.

“What?” Adonia sobbed.

“We fight. We fight for Jason, for all those who are suffering; to bring down the Dark Lord’s regime....”

“We fight? Where? How? What happens if we get caught. You’re already on their black list...”

“And you are a pure blood they won’t do anything to you.” She stood up and started pacing, ignoring her screaming muscles,

“We should fight. You’ve heard of the stories from years ago...Harry Potter the one who dared fight V...Voldemort.”

Adonia gasped.

Feeling even more reckless Josie carried on,

“There are still rumours, stories of underground resistance...”

“Stop it Josie, stop it!”

“If we can form our own resistance in Hogwarts, make the death eaters feel like they’re not in complete power...well, it’s a start isn’t it?”

She stopped and looked at Adonia; her eyes alight with a new kind of fire.

Adonia hesitated. What Josie was propositioning was mad, insane even. A death sentence if ever there was one....and yet to give others hope...

“We’ll call it Potter’s army. No, that sounds lame: how about...”

“The Angels? Call it TA for short.” At Josie’s enquiring look Adonia continued, “Well think about it: angels are meant to represent good and defend the weak right? So if we’re known as the Angels then it’s like we’re defending the people who can’t fight back.”

Josie nodded, liking the idea and symbolism.

“We’ll need to learn defensive spells though, as they don’t teach them. And proper history rather than that pureblood crap they spew out,” Josie snapped.

“No Slytherins though, it’ll be taking to much of a risk.”

“No Slytherins,” Josie agreed

Adonia nodded before reality kicked in,

“Where are we going to hold this though? I mean any extra curricular activities have to be approved by our head of house and then the head master then the governors before it can have the go ahead.”

Josie shrugged.

“It’ll be an illegal defence group.”

The idea somewhat thrilled her.

“Where will we do it? We can hardly go up to Nott and say, excuse me sir, could we please use the great hall for an illegal defence group to fight against the Dark Lord.”

Josie snorted at the thought but couldn't come up with any answers.

The classrooms were all locked after the last bell and there were regular patrols made along the corridors during the weekends and when school had finished by the Slytherin prefects as well as teachers.

Josie sunk back into a seat, not wanting to admit defeat but seeing no way to get around this current obstacle.

"Don't worry Josie, we'll find something," Adonia promised. Josie just nodded before making her way upstairs to bed, her feeling of rebellion growing steadily stronger instead of weakening at the dead end they had come up against.

No matter what, they would fight back and they would win even if it cost her life.

Thanks guys, please review

The next day Josie and Adonia went about in a wired mood. Both were aware that they could die for what they were planning but at the same time it gave them a sort of thrill that they were doing something about the regime.

However, first, they had to find somewhere to meet before they could contact anyone.

As Josie knew classrooms were out of the question and the great hall was out for obvious reasons.

The forbidden forest would be a good idea but, as Adonia pointed out, it would seem to suspicious if hoards of students were seen leaving the castle.

And they would be seen as the Headmaster and the teachers seemed to know everything that went on...and yet something inside her drove her onwards, not bothered by this small important fact. The need to give others hope was almost overpowering.

Seeing and accepting the defeat in the students eyes wasn't enough nor acceptable anymore

Christmas holidays came and so far neither girl had found a place to meet up and it was beginning to get disheartening; though as before Josie refused to give up. Her mother had always called her stubborn and Josie supposed this was what it was: stubbornness.

The detentions she had received had also helped fuel her on to opposing them and although she had put on the act of a model student since then to lull them into a false sense of security.

The information where they could meet came not only totally unexpectedly but also from a source Josie would never have considered.

Coming home for Christmas was more as an effort to get away from the castle than because she truly wanted to.

Ever since her father had been arrested by the death eaters her mother had never been the same. Mary Burns loved her daughter dearly as she was her only remaining link to James. However Josie was more like James than Josie knew and so this made it difficult for Mary.

So Mary herself had created walls to keep out most of the pain whenever she looked at her daughter which in turn made her distant and almost cold towards her daughter.

However to Josie it was better than constant detentions and snide comments in class about her father.

Climbing off the Hogwarts Express Josie saw her mother standing alone as usual in her long fur trimmed coat and, dragging her trunk, bid Adonia goodbye with promises to write before making her way towards her mother.

“Come along then,” Mary stated briskly after one look at Josie.

Josie, used to this treatment, didn’t say anything and followed her mother through the barrier and held her arm while they apparated towards their medium homey house in Newcastle.

Following her mother up the path towards the detached stone built house she took a look at the garden which was growing out of proportion again.

Her mother’s depression had clearly been worse since she had been away.

Walking inside the warm red of the lounge made her feel happier than she had in a while.

Dumping her trunk to take up to her room later she followed her mother into the kitchen and made two coffees, one for herself and one for her mum.

Thanking Josie Mary didn’t say anything until she had taken a few sips.

“I got a letter half way through the term about you: about talking back and being rude.”

Josie didn’t say anything. She knew why her mother was bringing this up: after losing her parents then her husband her mother was petrified of losing Josie as well.

Having a half blood for a daughter, her fears was well founded.

“Josephine, look at me.” Josie looked up into her mother’s face which suddenly seemed aged, “You give them a reason to arrest you and they will. Your father was muggle born but he was also an active member in the order which just gave them more reason. I lost him because he insisted on fighting. I don’t want to lose you for the same reason. No cause is worth dying for.”

“The death eaters would disagree with you on that mother,” Josie replied.

Mary looked down and Josie was surprised to see tears in her eyes.

“How can you be so selfish Josephine? I lost my parents and your father because they insisted on fighting them. Now I’ll lose you as well because you, like your father, are fighting them...”

“Mum have you got any letters since?”

Josie could see another bout of depression coming her way and she was determined to avoid it at all cost.

Mary took a deep breath and shook her head,

“Exactly; it was a one off and won’t happen again.”

To her utter surprise Mary laughed.

“Your father used to say that when we were dating. We used to sneak off to the room of Requirement on the third floor behind the tapestry of Barnaby the Brave or something like that.”

“Room of Requirement?” Josie asked, confused

“Yes. It is a room that, what you ask for it gives you. We used to sneak off there when dating. Asked the room to give us a place where we could spend quality romantic time together but that no one could get in...”

“You asked a room?” Josie asked slowly.

“You walk past the strip of wall near the tapestry three times, thinking hard about what you want. You have to ask it exactly what you want mind. Your father and me learnt that lesson when someone walked in on us...” Mary broke off, suddenly remembering who she was talking to. “Anyway, after we asked it to allow no one entry we never had any trouble again.”

Mary turned back to the stove where she started cooking pasta,

“Is pasta and cheese tonight okay? You look underfed?” Josie nodded absently, an idea forming in her mind as they spoke.

“Mum, can Adonia come over her for the holidays?”

Mary was throwing pasta in a pan full of water,

“I don’t see why not,” she answered, “It’ll keep you out of trouble for a bit.”

“Great, I’ll go owl her now.”

Running upstairs and into her room she found Blast, the family’s brown barn owl, on her perch.

Scribbling a note but making sure not to add anything suspicious in-case it got intercepted she tied it to Blast’s leg and sent him off.

Sighing she walked downstairs, retrieved her trunk and dragged it back upstairs to her room.

Small but cosy with fiery red sheets and cream walls it smelled of cinnamon which always warmed her insides.

Dumping her trunk next to her tatty wardrobe she threw herself on her bed and stared up at the cracked ceiling and thought over everything her mother had said.

A room which would give you anything you asked for, would even prevent certain people coming in? Could it really be true; because if it was then it would be absolutely perfect: of course they'd have to check it out first before alerting people to the first meeting...what if no one wanted to come though, that they were too scared?

They'd have to ensure maximum security by learning memory spells. These weren't taught usually until sixth year but Adonia was a smart witch and together Josie supposed they could learn.

After-all her house was considered magic so she didn't have to worry about being caught with underage magic.

Making her decision Josie got up off her bed and made her way to the end of the hallway which had three doors: one was her room, one her mother's room and one which led to the bathroom. At the end though, was a blank wall which to anyone else would be seen as such but Josie knew better.

Tapping her wand in four places to make a diamond shape the wall disappeared to reveal a long stone low ceiling hallway lit by constant-burning torches.

Following the corridor she walked into a high ceiling circular room with all of her dad's old things as well as boxes and boxes full of old books.

Making her way towards some of her parents old school stuff she rummaged about until she found what she was looking for,

A History of Magic by Bathilda Bagshott

Standard Book of Spells level 5

Standard Book of Spells level 6

Standard Book of Spells level 7

Advanced Potions Making by Libatus Borage

Most Potent Potions

There were others but Josie decided to look at those later.

Most of these books, with the exception of the Standard book of spells, had been banned because their content weren't pro-pureblood. However her mother, unable to bring herself to get ride of the memories of happier times that the books represented, hid them by creating an undetectable room behind a wall where only people of her own blood, aka Josie, could enter.

Carrying the books to her own room she removed a spare floorboard where Josie kept all her precious things; most things relating to her father. The first two birthday cards she had with his signature on it; a small photo album her mother had given her with pictures of them as a family before the death eaters took her father away.

Placing the books under the floorboards she replaced the loose floorboard and went to wash her hands.

“Josephine! Dinner’s ready!” Her mother’s voice carried up the stairs.

Sighing Josie went downstairs, preparing herself for a very formal dinner with her mother.

Adonia wrote back that she could come the day after Boxing Day and spend the rest of the holidays with Josie before being taken back to platform 9¾ on January the seventh.

Arriving at Josie’s house Adonia followed Josie upstairs to her bedroom after saying the necessities to Mrs Burns.

After closing the door Josie got straight to the point,

“I’ve found us a place where we can hold the TA.”

Adonia sat up straighter, all alert,

“Where?”

So Josie explained about the room of requirement and what her mother had said about asking specifically what you want and it would give it to you,

“We would have to try it out first, obviously, but I think it’s a good idea. What about you?”

Adonia nodded,

“Yeah, I agree. We’ll try it out when we get back to school though we’ll have to have a reason for being up there...”

“You’re a pureblood, they won’t ask too many questions,” Josie cut in.

“Yes, but you’re not.” This pulled the conversation to a halt, until Adonia said more quietly,

“We need to be realistic about this Josie and careful. If not then the TA will be crushed before it has even started. I’m all for idealism but we have to be realistic ta the same time and the reality is you are not a pureblood. I could go up there with another pureblood, maybe Trevor, and see if it there.”

Josie nodded

“We also can’t give them any reason to believe that you are involved as, what was it Lestrange said? A one way ticket to Azkaban?”

“Yeah, along those lines,” Josie replied glumly then perked up, “But I’ve been reading about certain defensive spells and potions from my dad’s old textbooks. We could use those...”

Adonia brightened,

“Yes I’ve been reading up on certain spells as well. Memory charms really, as we may need to place one on people who don’t want to join just in case they blab.”

Josie nodded before an idea suddenly hit her and she wondered why she had not thought of this before,

“What...what if we beat them at their own game?”

At Adonia’s look Josie continued,

“We’re taught about dark arts, aren’t we? So what happens if we use Dark Arts against them? They won’t think anything is up as they will be so pleased people are taking a bigger interest in the disgusting subject. I also remember Nott saying that the Dark Arts is a deep creative flexible subject so we can...adapt the spells we learn in class and use them against the death eaters. What do you think?”

“I think that’s a good idea. And if we have members in classes above us then they can teach the rest of us what they’ve learnt and if asked why we’ve gotten so good at Dark Arts we’ll just say...”

“We’ve read some background stuff and practiced more advanced spells,” Josie finished.

Silence as they digested this and the enormity of what they were planning.

“Do you think they’ll fall for it though?” Adonia asked with a note of fear in her voice.

“If they are stupid enough to join up to the death eaters then they are stupid enough to fall for a punch of purebloods making considerable headway in Dark Arts.”

“So you’re not going to work harder at Dark Arts?” Adonia asked with considerable surprise as it had been Josie’s idea to use Dark Arts in the first place.

“It will be less conspicuous that way. And if they are offered a place in joining up with the Dark Lord well, we could use spies...”

“Hold on, we’re getting a bit a-head of ourselves here. Why don’t we just start slow; find out who wants to join, have a meeting in this Room and then go on from there?”

Adonia Osborne, the voice of reason and sensibility.

Josie nodded, seeing the sensibility behind it.

No need to jump in the deep end when you can use steps to slowly ease your way in.

Removing the floorboard Josie pulled out the books she had taken from the secret room and showed her friend who flicked through the more advanced books.

“These will be hard but if we practice enough I don’t see why we can’t do them.”

“I think we should practice the memory spells first. We’ve only got two weeks left before we have to go back but if we learn them now then we won’t have to mess about when we get back,” Adonia responded

“Yeah I agree, and besides we have more chance of not being disturbed or questioned here.”

Adonia nodded and they got to work on the memory spells that were halfway through Standard Book of Spells level 6.

As predicted they were hard; harder than anything they had come across and the rest of the holidays were spent eating, sleeping and practicing various spells that they both thought might come in useful ranging from hexes like the bat bogey one, which they had never heard of, to Memory charms.

Too scared to practice on each other in case something went horribly wrong and questions were asked they practiced on a mannequin that

Josie found hidden in the secret room which held the past and happier times in her mother life.

As for Josie's mother herself, she had taken to go out drinking most nights with various friends to block out her depression.

It was a shame, people said when they saw her downing a whole bottle of fire-whiskey, and she had been a brilliant witch and could have gone far had she not made the colossal mistake of marrying that mudblood and having a half-blood brat.

So it was Josie saw very little of her mother in the holidays which didn't upset her as it usually would have done. She and Adonia just spent the time practicing more spells and planning in Josie's room until January the 7th came around and they were boarding the Hogwarts Express, finding an empty compartment easily.

Sitting down they played a game of wizards chess before they were joined by Trevor Bones, Jamie Corner (a Ravenclaw with brown hair and glasses) and Ellen Ballard (a Hufflepuff with long red hair pulled back into a pony tail and bright grey eyes).

Chatting about their holidays which didn't take long as nothing much had happened Adonia cast a silencing spell she had learnt in the holidays against the door.

"Wow where did you learn to do that?" Jamie asked in awe; his glasses falling down his nose while he pushed them back up.

"Over the holidays; now shut up and listen," Josie said while looking at Adonia who nodded, "We are thinking of starting up a rebellion against the death eaters called the angels and we need to know how many people are interested in joining?"

"A...a rebellion...but we could get killed?" Ellen stuttered

"You're mad!" Jamie said, stunned but inspired at the same time.

"How did this idea come about?" Trevor put in, intrigued.

"It started when Jason got taken away," Adonia said, then gave a small sob. She had never truly gotten over this, "w...we decided that if we let them then more half bloods would be taken and then...then possibly purebloods not in Slytherin house. We need to give people hope, to... to give them a reason to live again and even if we just succeed in making the death eaters feel not a hundred percent in control then that's good enough."

Josie was watching the three other participants faces as Adonia explained, ready to oblige them if they showed any signs of reluctance.

However this wasn't the case as they all nodded in agreement,

"Where would we hold it though," Trevor asked, "I mean classrooms are..."

"We've thought about that," Josie broke through Trevor, and then went on to explain about the Room of Requirement and the plan they had come up with to check it out.

"Indeed. It must be transfiguration then; I wonder how it was made?" Jamie asked making the others roll their eyes: typical Ravenclaw, always looking at the academic aspect.

"Who's in then?"

"I'm in," Trevor answered immediately,

"A...and me." Despite her stutter there was firmness behind Ellen's words.

"Well I defiantly want to be part of it. Imagine how much we could learn," Jamie put in, making the others laugh.

Josie took out a piece of parchment and quill,

"Sign your names then and spread the word round in your houses to see who would be interested but only ask people you think are trustworthy. We don't want the teachers to get wind of this."

The others nodded solemnly and after signing their names and Adonia placing a charm on it to make it visible only to the people who had signed their names and then spending another fifteen minutes showing Jamie how the charm worked, Josie placed the parchment in her book bag in her trunk before going back to plotting.

Oh Merlin it felt good, Josie thought as the others contributed different ideas that neither Adonia nor Josie had thought of, to be doing something and that other people were willing to join in.

Her good mood lasted until a prefect came around telling them to get changed as they were nearly there and suddenly her good mood lessened considerably.

Climbing into the carriages which would take them up to the castle and Josie glimpsed Hogwarts which by the light of the full moon looked more fearsome and dark than before Josie fell back into her usual glum down mood and from the look of her friends they felt the same.

Though despite their glum expressions there was a solid granite determination there that hadn't been there before which gave more hope to the fire that was burning in Josie's chest.

As they all filed into the great hall quietly and sat down at their respective house tables for dinner Josie looked up at the head table to see all of the teachers there looking as cruel and evil as ever.

Her glance went to the headmaster who was watching the students come in with a lethal look.

By taking away Jason you just made the biggest mistake of your life, she thought viciously, and very soon you'll realize it.

Ah! The story is moving on. Hope you enjoyed this as much as I enjoyed writing it. I swear the characters and story just took over for themselves.

Please review guys and feed my review addiction, thanks. Xx

Adonia and Trevor were walking along the seventh floor towards the tapestry of Barnabus the Barmy being clubbed by a bunch of trolls, trying to look inconspicuous.

School had ended for the day and both students, on their way up here, hadn't met any patrolling teachers or Slytherin prefects. This made them uneasy.

"They are all probably at dinner..." Trevor started only to jump as a voice from the shadows said,

"Who are all at dinner, Bones? Not trying anything...naughty are we?" Blake Zambini and Aldon Nott, sixth year Slytherins, stepped out of the shadows and started to walk towards them with the face of the cat that had caught the canary.

Both Adonia and Trevor froze up and stared at the prefects in fear.

"Aw look Blake, the little itty bitty fourth years are scared of us," Aldon said in a baby voice.

"As they should be," Blake said smoothly, smiling to reveal perfect white teeth.

Taking out of his pocket his wand he pointed it at them both, "I asked you a question: what are you doing here?"

"W...We were looking for Professor Nott..." Adonia lied, saying the first thing that came into her head.

"Any why, pray tell, would my grandfather be up here?" Aldon asked in a sneering voice.

Trevor took over. Shrugging he said,

"We asked a Gryffindor fifth year where he was as Adonia wanted to ask him something about our Dark Arts homework. The fifth year told us she thought he had come up here."

“Yeah that was why when we said they were all at dinner we meant Professor Nott...”

“Did someone say my name?” The cold crystal clear dialect of Adonia’s head of house came drifting across the hallway and all four teenagers swivelled round to see Professor Nott come striding down; his long black and green robes billowing slightly behind him.

A tall man even in his 60’s, he still had a full head of long greying hair that was held back tastefully in a ponytail. In his hand he held a long cane that he used when patrolling.

Aldon stood up straighter. If his grandfather told his dad that he had been disrespectful then he really would be in for it as his father had standards; very, very high standards on behaviour towards his elders.

“Aldon what is going on here?”

“They wanted to see you Sir,” Aldon managed in a perfect respectful voice.

“Indeed? And what do you two want? I would have thought you would be down at dinner...”

“It is about our Dark Art’s homework Professor,” Adonia jumped in before Trevor had a chance to speak,

“What about it? I thought I made myself quite clear...”

“Oh you did Sir; it was just that Trevor and I were wondering if we could do an extra credit project on various curses from the Forgotten Era.”

Nott’s face registered his shock then suspicion,

“How did you hear about the Forgotten Era? I don’t believe that is taught until seventh year?”

Adonia’s face became pink at this small mistake but she had an excuse on hand,

“I...I read one of my brother’s old textbooks over the holidays sir,” she admitted. And it was true; she had read them after asking her mother to send them to Josie’s house.

Her brother had left Hogwarts to go work at the ministry two years ago so it was a valid excuse

“I see. Well I don’t think it would do you any harm to do an extra credit project. Why now as you have not taken such interest in my subject before?”

Adonia turned pink at being caught out though thankfully her next words gave off the right impression.

“Well over the holidays my brother was talking about the aurors and it seemed, well, interesting; and I know you need top marks in all subjects and an O in your Dark Arts so I thought just to get a bit ahead with my work so when I start taking my OWLS next year I’ll be more prepared.”

“Have you been doing extra credit projects for your other subjects? I haven’t heard anything?”

“I...I’ve been thinking about it sir, I mean we have....”

“We thought to start slow then raise the bar over the course of the year.”

Nott bought it easily much to Trevor’s surprise.

“I see. Well, then you have two weeks to do an extra credit project to be presented to the class two weeks on Friday. How many marks you will receive depends on the depth of your knowledge and research.”

He retrieved from his pocket a quill and a piece of parchment and quickly scribbled down some book names and his signature at the bottom,

"If you are serious in this ambition Osborne then I suggest you read some of these books beforehand. Here is my permission to retrieve these from the restricted section."

He handed the two gaping fourth years the piece of parchment, neither being able to believe their luck at not only being believed but also gaining access to the restricted section.

Stammering their thanks as it would look suspicious otherwise, Nott nodded before barking,

"Now run along to dinner before it ends."

He didn't want the students to think he was going soft! Both fourth years nodded, and holding the piece of parchment as if it were a life line, ran down the corridor until they were out of sight.

Taking a deep breath as they hid behind a tapestry they waited until their heart rates were back to normal before speaking in hush whispers,

"Can you believe it? He bought it?"

"Yes but it means that we'll have to do the extra work," Adonia answered, "Which means..."

"Which means more information for the TA; I honestly thought he was going to throw us in detention for not being at dinner but then that crap you came out with, I mean yeah we'll have to do it now but still...brilliant!" Trevor finished his hero worshipping.

"He would have thrown us in detention if we had been half bloods," Adonia said gravely, remembering what Josie said in the holidays.

Glancing around from behind the tapestry she saw the corridor was clear,

"Come on," she whispered and they hurried along until they reached the tapestry and the blank stretch of wall opposite it.

Walking past the piece of wall three times Adonia concentrated hard on what they needed,

We need somewhere where we can practice to fight back. Somewhere where we can have meetings for a lot of people and not be found out by any Dark Lord supporters. A place where we can learn to defend ourselves

Finishing her pacing she kept her eyes closed. It was only a gasp from Trevor which made her open them...to see a door materialising in front of them.

Taking a deep breath she opened it and walked in, followed by Trevor.

This time she couldn't hold back a gasp as she saw what was in the room:

A swirly staircase at the far end of the huge room led up to a balcony where there seemed to be hundreds of books and comfy chairs: like a mini library.

Downstairs there were cushions piled in a corner, some instruments on a nearby table that she didn't recognize as well as a roaring fire at the far end to give the room a cosy feeling.

Mannequins were huddled together at the far end disguised as death eaters holding 'wands'.

"This is...amazing," Trevor breathed and Adonia nodded. It was amazing...and perfect.

Walking over to a table to look at what looked like a small telescope she heard Trevor close the door and bolt upstairs to where the books were.

After exploring the downstairs for a while and finding more defensive equipment she heard Trevor yelling from above,

"The books are all on defence and defending ourselves. Listen to this: Most used Hexes and Jinks: be prepared and here is defending

yourself: a practical guide for beginners...hey do you think we can take these books with us?"

"I wouldn't," Adonia called back, "What if they were found? I wouldn't want to answer the questions that came up then."

Trevor fell silent in acceptance though she could still hear him rummaging about.

Glancing at her watch she was stunned to find it was eight o'clock.

"Hey Trev," Adonia called. Trevor's round face appeared over the balcony, "I think we better get a move on, grab these books Nott recommended from the library and go back to the common room."

Trevor nodded and made his way back down,

"At least we know it's here," Trevor remarked after they had left the room and watched it disintegrate into the wall.

"Yeah, come on," Both purebloods hurried towards the library and showed Madam Pince the piece of parchment, as she had been kept on by the death eaters as she had such an unnatural love for books and knowledge of the library.

"You are a bit young to be looking at these books, are you not? Usually only seventh years take them out, fifth if pushing it." Both teenagers kept a straight face,

"Professor Nott said we could take them out," Adonia responded.

Madam Pince frowned before holding the note up to the light as if determined to find it a forgery. However, after finally concluding that it was real she turned on her heal into the restricted section and returned with three old dusty leather bound books.

Taking the books both teenagers smiled charmingly at her before turning towards the door and trying not to walk too quickly; exited the library.

Saying goodbye and agreeing to meet up in the library the next day to start on the project just so it wouldn't seem suspicious they went their separate ways

It was only when Adonia got to the portrait of the fat lady and entered the password that she felt safe to let go of the breath she had been holding.

Climbing through the hole into the common room Adonia spotted Josie in a corner writing something; probably homework.

Coming over she sat down next to Josie and got out her homework,

“It’s real,” she said conversationally as if she were talking about the weather. Josie merely nodded; her long brown hair flapping about in her face. Josie wiped it away irritably before grinning.

“What’s it like?” she asked while writing the various poisons and their uses that come from the stomach and liver of a snake.

“Perfect.”

“I’ll look at it on Sunday, then. Can you get the word to Trevor, Ellen and Jamie to spread the word to people they think will be interested to meet us there after breakfast??”

Adonia nodded before going back to her own ancient runes essay on the advantages of using runes in magical circles.

Sunday came surprisingly quickly and Josie remembered something about how time always flew when you were looking forward to something.

Following her friends up to the seventh floor they waited as Adonia paced back and forth three times, muttering under her breath.

Josie gasped when she was done as a door materialised out of nowhere.

“Come on, before we get caught!” Adonia hissed and they all walked in and, gasping in awe at the magnificence of the room, sat down on cushions and beanbags provided and waited for people to come.

“Who did you guys talk to?” Josie asked

“A few members in my year,” Jamie answered, “only then a few older students overheard and seemed keen to come and see what it is about.”

“Quite a few Hufflepuffs wanted to come,” Trevor added, “I think we’ll get a good turnout from Hufflepuff if nothing else.”

“H...How a...about G...G...your house?” Ellen finally asked, her stutter getting in the way.

“Yeah, like Hufflepuff we got a good amount of interest.”

“N...No....S....S...Slytherins t...though,” Ellen finally managed.

“NO!” Josie yelled, before lowering her voice “We are not taking the risk. Most of them are kids of death eaters of pureblood fanatics. It’ll be over before it’s begun.”

Just then the door opened to admit a few sixth year Hufflepuff and Ravenclaws glancing over their shoulders in a frightened way.

With a nod towards the fourth years they sat a way away, on cushions talking among themselves.

The door opened and more people came through ranging from fourth year to seventh years in Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Gryffindor.

When it looked like no one else was going to arrive, Josie stood up on a stool and the room fell silent.

Taking a deep breath Josie began,

“You know why you’re here: we, that are Jamie, Adonia, Trevor Ellen and I, decided to set up a resistance group against the death eaters

here in Hogwarts. Yes, I know it's risky but...but after what happened to Jason and, and I have it on good authority he was half blood," Many Griffindors nodded, "we, well Adonia really, thought who's going to be next. First it'll be half bloods, the blood traitors, and then purebloods themselves. Jason did nothing wrong what so ever aside from having a muggle as a mother and she was taken away just after he was born.

"We've all lost someone to the death eaters; I myself have lost my dad. Are we just going to sit back and allow them to knock us off one by one and let the memories of our loved one and the fight they put up die in vain? I don't know about the rest of you by my dad was a fighter and I'm going to carry on the fight he started. Yes it will be frightening and we may even die for what we are doing; but if we can win this war then think how our children will be grateful to know that if they answer back to a teacher then they won't be tortured for it; or if they look at a Slytherin the 'wrong way' they won't be hanging by their ankles in the dungeons? I want to fight and I'm asking you to fight alongside us. Will you do it?"

A seventh year Hufflepuff whom Josie didn't recognize stood up and addressed the others,

"My mother herself was a muggleborn and they took her to be a slave in one of the older family's house," he spat on the floor to show what he thought of that, "Before she was taken she told me stories about how it used to be before the Dark Lord came back. When she was taken my dad went in on himself, and I vowed to make my mother proud regardless by getting my revenge. Today I'm going to fulfil that vow and fight and fight and fight some more until that overgrown snake and his bastards are taken down," he turned towards Josie, "Where do I sign?"

It was if a bomb had gone off: everyone was clamouring to sign their names on a piece of parchment.

After everyone had signed up they all sat back down calmly and Josie stood up again,

“Now to those who don’t know we were going to call it ‘The Angels’, TA for short. It was my idea to turn their own magic against them; use the dark arts, adapt them and use it to fight back. What the older ones are learning they can teach the younger ones...”

“Who’s leader here?” A fifth year Ravenclaw with a broad Scottish accent called out called out, Macleay Josie thought his name was.

“Josie and Adonia are,” Jamie replied patronizingly, as if talking to a very thick pupil.

The boy glared,

“I think we should take a democratic vote on it?” he replied stubbornly

Jamie just glared at him before announcing, after pushing his glasses back up his nose,

“All in favour of letting Josie and Adonia as leaders raise your hand.” The majority raised their hands.

“Well that’s that decided,” Jamie declared with a snide look towards Macleay who glared back at him.

“Good. Now that is decided we need to decide when we can meet up. Any preferences?”

“Sunday’s good because none of us have any study periods then,” A Gryffindor called; McLadden Josie thought his name was.

“Is everyone okay with that?” Josie called and as there were no major grumbles then Josie took that as a yes.

“Good, now while we are learning the dark arts from the...teachers and older students then...”

“But then doesn’t that make the older students leader?” It was Macleay again, who seemed adamant to cause a problem,

“Why don’t you just shut up?” Jamie asked sarcastically,

“Watch it four eyes...”

“That’s enough Macleay,” a seventh year Gryffindor steeped in. Tall with closely cropped blond hair and blue eyes he held a complete air of authority around him, “These kids are doing what none of us have dared to do. Jamison-“he nodded towards the Hufflepuff who had been the first to sign up, “is right. We need to do something to avenge our parents or loved ones and you bickering and causing a problem isn’t going to help. If we meet every Sunday and every other Sunday we can learn defence while the other Sundays the older ones can teach the younger ones what we have learnt in defence. Is that okay?” he asked the room at large and everyone, thirty five people in Josie’s estimate, nodded.

The Gryffindor, James Law, Josie thought his name was, nodded towards Josie and sat back down.

“Yeah, so we’ll get a rota going for what we will learn and who will teach it. That’s fair I think. AND-” she raised her voice because it looked like Macleay was going to butt in again, “WE’LL MEET UP NEXT WEEK FOR OUR FIRST LESSON IN DEFENCE! UNTIL THEN EVERYONE HERE WORK HARDER IN YOUR LESSONS AND COMBINING OUR KNOWLEDGE WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE TRULY SPECTACULAR SPELLS TO FIGHT BACK WITH” She had raised her voice to a shout as Macleay looked mutinous at not getting his say.

Adonia stepped in,

“Until then work harder, though not so noticeably it will draw attention to yourselves, and try and act normal in class. We’ll see you next week then?” she added after looked at Josie who nodded confirmation.

The sound of people getting up and scrambling about the room to get a better look at it now the official stuff was past came and Josie suddenly felt a sudden headache come on as Adonia next to her placed the list on the wall, and doing some spell work over it.

“There, now no-one whom name’s isn’t on the list, won’t be able to see it.”

Josie smiled at her best friend; before watching as people left in drips and drabs to go back to their common rooms.

Finally it was just Josie, Ellen, Trevor, Jamie and Adonia who exited after a quick look round to ensure no patrolling teacher or prefect was about.

Walking down the steps in silence they got to the hallway where they would have to separate.

“See you guys later then,” Josie called to the others before walking back with Adonia up to the portrait of the fat lady,

“Gillyweed,” Josie said and after a nod the fat lady swung open to admit them.

Stepping into the common room Josie thought she had walked into the wrong room.

Cheers greeted her from what seemed like everyone in Gryffindor and suddenly all the doubts she had been harbouring in her mind vanished and her mood soured as she saw all the hope and happiness in her fellow house mates faces.

Accepting a glass of pumpkin juice that had been swiped from the kitchens Josie allowed herself to fully enjoy the moment and not worry about death eaters, Voldemort, what would happen if they got caught or just about anything else.

Over the next few weeks things began to change dramatically: Graffiti lined the walls with various slogans such as ‘Half Bloods Rock, Purebloods Suck’ and ‘Blood Purity means nothing’.

People began to talk back in lessons, making the detention ratio go through the roof.

However far from deterring the bad behaviour the detentions only seemed to spur them on despite how bad they were.

Two weeks on from the first meeting when Adonia and Trevor presented their project to the class, Professor Nott looked shattered as well as seriously irate: Josie made sure to take loads of notes in that class so as not to give him a reason to take his anger out on her.

However despite this, the satisfaction that Josie was getting from the rebellion and seeing how much it was getting to the teachers as they tried in vain to find the culprits; going to extreme measures in some cases but always failing as Ben Law, the seventh year Gryffindor, had adapted a dark spell which helped eves-drop on conversations as well as finding out things from the staff room which helped keep them one step ahead.

Watching Amycus Carrow getting more and more angry in Dark Charms gave Josie such an uplifting feeling that she felt like she was walking on air for the rest of the day.

Far away, standing at the entrance to a large deep forest stood a thirty two year old man. He was staring out onto a mound of rubble that had once been a muggle city but was now nothing more than pieces of rock and dust.

The anger in him knew no bounds and he had to turn away before he did something he regretted and was caught by those death eaters that still patrolled the area every now and then.

Walking deeply into the forest the man reflected on how much had changed since Harry had died. He had not been there when it had happened but the people who had witnessed it refused to talk about it; going teary eyed whenever it was mentioned and going into a deep silence until the subject was changed. Just like Voldemort himself and how people used to be too scared to speak his name, even when he had been temporally defeated.

Harry though had never been afraid to speak Voldemort's name though, so should people still shy away from speaking it; from

refusing to talk about Harry's death? Would Harry have wanted that? The simple answer was no.

Making his way down a deep tunnel whose entrance was obscured by nature itself the man came out into a large circular room with various tatty couches and tables dotted about. Another corridor led off from the main room and, ignoring the greetings he got from various people, he followed the tunnel down, down into the earth.

Opening a door on his right he entered the bedroom he shared with Ernie: sparsely furnished the room held two make-shift beds, a chair and a shaving mirror on the wall.

The man headed to the mirror and upon reaching it took a good long look at himself: his once chubby round face was gaunt and hollow; revealing how much he had gone through in the past fifteen years; his once short brown hair had grown halfway down his back being held in check by a pony tail. A short cut beard, one Ernie hated as it made him seem ten years older, graced his face. The man had let it grow to hide the many scars underneath.

Though not all his scars were visible, he reflected; the closest you could come to see the internal damage was to look deep, deep into his blue eyes.

His parents insanity had been the first scar, then Harry and Ron's death just after he had turned seventeen had been the second and third; a year later Hermione Granger's imprisonment in Azkaban as a 'class A' prisoner had marked the fourth. His Grans murder shortly after that had marked the fifth.

Since the there had been many more as he carried on fighting; stories of people had known and loved dying or being imprisoned for ludicrous 'crimes'. Each scar had picked away at his resistance until the final blow had come with the death of his girlfriend: Luna.

The final thrust of the knife had broken him and reduced him to a frightened coward who ran away from the danger rather than face it. No one could hate him as much as he hated himself every time he glanced in the mirror.

Luna had been his rock and it was in her memory that he had built this place: Sanctuary; a safe haven for refugees and runaways; people who couldn't fight any more; who had had enough and just wanted to hide: people like him.

His parents had fought and given their sanity for it. He had run away instead. Why the hat had placed him in Gryffindor he had no idea.

Lying on the bed and staring at the ceiling he decided it was official: Neville Longbottom, himself, was a coward of the highest order.

Ah, don't kill me. However I thought this would be a great place to leave it as it would leave all you lovely readers begging for more. Don't worry though, I have great plans for Neville in future chapters (smiles secretly). I'm also really sorry about those two speeches and how corny they were (yes I admit it) but I needed to make them corny so it would spur the others on. Though they seem to be having a great time at the moment the TA will come up against problems soon...just to give you a glimpse of what might happen. The rest I'll leave up to your imaginations.

Anyway, I've decided that reviews are my drug so feed my addiction people and review.

Thanks again. Xx

The Death Eater swore as he stubbed his toe on a loose stone on his rounds of the cells. Bending down to rub it he swore once more for personal effect before standing up and resuming his duties.

If there was one thing he hated about being posted at Azkaban for six months at a time was the rounds that he had to do every three nights.

Especially in the 'Class A' prisoner cells where the moans, screams and cries reverberated round his mind and in his dreams long after he had finished: all except one and it was this one that chilled him the most.

Banging his fist against the door as he reached it he glanced inside to the huddled figure in the corner covered in rags.

The figure only stirred slightly but didn't make any noise of any kind. Not even a small groan to show the dementors were getting to her.

Under any other circumstances the woman would be deemed dead but she was alive and, well, not well exactly but as sane as you could get in here.

Raising her matted but still bushy brown head of hair she locked her chocolate brown eyes with the guard.

"Yes?" Her voice, although a croak, held some sort of stubbornness behind it that the dementors couldn't break.

The death eater, unnerved by this but refusing to show it, merely said,

"I don't want any trouble from you tonight, understand?"

The woman merely smiled a humourless chilly smile. The death eater, Bob was his name, wondered suddenly if she was insane but was just better at hiding it than the other prisoners.

Suddenly, feeling vastly unnerved, he carried on, on his rounds and the woman listened to him leave before taking a deep breath and, using all her concentration, turned herself into a hawk.

Immediately her senses were heightened and Harry's last screams died away as the dementor's effect lessened considerably.

Tonight she was going to break free. The guard wouldn't come back on his rounds for another day or so and the dementors would probably think she was dead from the lack of emotion coming from the cell.

Slipping through the bars in her fragile thin state; she flew, albeit slowly to reserve her energy, down corridor after corridor; past screaming cell after cell until she reached the foyer.

A wizard dressed in Death Eater robes was sitting behind a large wooden polished mahogany desk and the woman, in her hawk form, felt hatred swell in her as the memories tried to force their way to the surface.

Reminding herself she hadn't come all this way just to let the memories take over now, she blocked them out with her weakened Occlumency skills and silently turned back into a human behind him.

Silently picking up a paperweight she brought it crashing down on his head.

Falling into unconsciousness immediately, the death eater slumped to the floor silently and the woman pocketed his wand before creeping round the desk and opening the doors that led to the outside and...freedom!

Thirteen years of being locked up in the hell hole called Azkaban and seeing nothing out of her small cell window but rock the woman was not surprised to find tears running down her cheeks as the emotion of seeing the sea again, feeling the tangy salt air and smelling the deep salty smell of the North Sea, wafted over her.

Pulling herself together she turned back into a hawk and flew away from the island. The ride was long and tiring. Just as she thought she was going to pass out from lack of energy and hunger she spotted land up ahead.

Forcing herself onwards she flew until she crossed the cliff and landed in the shelter of some trees nearby.

Smelling the fresh smell of new earth the woman couldn't hold back the tears this time and lay on the ground for little more than twenty minutes crying silently in happiness.

Opening her eyes she looked up and was met by the sight of the moon; a sight she had never thought to see again after been given three life sentences by that bastard Lucius Malfoy and the 'justice system' of the ministry.

Taking a deep breath she wandered more deeply into the forest and turned into a hawk again so she could find food more easily.

Her senses, despite dulled by her deep hunger, and spotted a small rabbit in the bushes onto her left.

Flying down with her talons out she grabbed the rabbit by the back and, turning back into a human, broke its neck in one swift movement.

Tearing her fingers into its innards she gutted it and ripped the fur off before eating it raw.

After the dross Azkaban served raw rabbit was a feast to her.

Beggars couldn't be choosers after all, and a fire would give her away immediately. Also being squeamish wasn't an option. Hadn't Sirius himself, when he had broken out of Azkaban the same way as she had, lived off rats for months in a small cave near Hogsmeade?

The woman smiled grimly to herself as she realised that until she could get to the old headquarters then she would be stuck eating rats, mice and rabbits; raw as well, probably.

Forcing her heaving stomach down the woman turned back into a hawk and flew west heading towards Number 12 Grimmauld Palace; the last known headquarters for the order of the phoenix and,

hopefully, some familiar friendly faces weather it from the DA, the order or just people she had known and loved from school.

So long as they were not hostile and ready to turn her in at the first opportunity Hermione Granger wasn't bothered.

Arriving at 12 Grimmauld Palace in London, Hermione smiled to herself before flying to the front step and turning back into a human.

She had been flying for three days and no doubt they would have found her missing by now, if not before.

Opening the door she walked in, wondering if the Fidelius charm was still up. However one glance around and she knew that it was still safe.

Although dusty and dirty everything was as she remembered it with the exception of the fact that when she had been here the house had been rife with people. Now it just looked like no one had been here in years; perhaps it had been abandoned after she had been imprisoned?

But Neville would have carried on the rebellion, wouldn't he? Remembering the tall spirited young man he had grown into Hermione refused to believe he would give in.

He and Luna were going to get married, she remembered, but the war had got in the way. However once glance at the love they had for each other just spurred people on.

Hermione hoped that they had got married regardless of her imprisonment but where were they now? If the headquarters had been abandoned, like it looked like, then that raised possibilities that Hermione didn't want to comprehend.

Panicking now Hermione ran up the stairs calling all for everyone; her need for a friendly known face overriding everything else,

“Neville? Luna? Kingsly? Lupin? Tonks? Moody?”

Her voice gradually got more and more shrill which in turn woke Mrs Black up, Hermione had forgotten about her.

“Filth, mudblood scum; disgraces the house of my forefathers.”

Somehow the shrill loud voice of Mrs Black snapped Hermione out of her panic. Taking a deep breath and allowing herself to become calm and collected she turned walked down the stairs and up to the portrait she took out her stolen wand and, waving it, shut the curtains on the screaming offensive portrait.

How Sirius had managed to live that offensive woman for sixteen years and then two more when he was on the run was amazing.

Taking a deeper breath Hermione walked downstairs to the kitchen basement and sat at the table while pondering what to do. The best way would of course be to get a message via the old galleons that the DA had used.

However, Hermione's had been taken away from her; along with everything else aside from her robes, when she's been escorted to Azkaban.

The memory of seeing her wand snapped in front of her still brought tears to her eyes.

The fake coin out of the picture, Hermione looked at her other options. They were depressingly short.

The best course of action, of course, was to get a message to someone of the order or the DA. However now that she had seen that the headquarters had been deserted she had no idea who was still free, or Merlin forbid, alive.

Thirteen years in jail and not knowing anything that went on...hold on, that was it!

They must have carried on fighting because people had been taken to Azkaban all the time after she had been arrested so that meant that there would be papers. Papers with news in them!

Walking upstairs quietly, so as not to disturb Mrs Black she hurried up to the first floor.

Slowly and carefully Hermione went through every room and every floor, until she found what she was looking for.

The old newspapers were all dumped in a room on the third floor in a spare bedroom; two years worth if the dates were anything to go by.

Checking out the papers she found nothing that she either didn't know or was nothing of real importance: like Draco Malfoy marrying Astoria Greengrass.

Chuckling that paper to the side she spent the next four hours going through the papers until she stumbled on one, one of the last ones, which stopped her in her tracks

LUNA LOVEGOOD DEAD!

Hermione, feeling tears prick her eyes, blinked them back and forced herself to read the article which described the death of one of her closest friends.

Apparently she had been caught along with a few others in the Ministry and rather than come quietly had fought. Hermione smiled; that sounded like the Luna she knew: always willing to fight for what was right and not give in easily.

The last line of the article stuck out though, making Hermione want to retch,

Unfortunately due to the disturbed nature of these people, who clearly didn't realise that trespassing on the Ministry was a severe crime punishable by ten years in Azkaban, three out of the five were killed. The other two escaped narrowly after realising they were outnumbered though the public is reassured that Aurors are looking for them and that they won't get far,

A spokesman from the ministry, Mr T Travors reports,

“This is despicable breach of security and the ministry will be launching a full investigation on how they managed to get in.”

When asked about the death Mr Travors just shrugged and said,

“They insisted on fighting; they got what they asked for.”

Only one of the dead has been named and that was the notorious blood traitor Luna Lovegood rumoured to be engaged to the most wanted man in the whole country: Neville Frank Longbottom...

There was more but Hermione didn't want to read it.

“Oh Neville,” she whispered to herself as the tears flowed freely. He would be broken; Luna had been his rock. Hermione now thought she knew why the resistance had broken up.

Without Luna Neville would see no reason to keep on fighting and without Neville the others wouldn't know what to do.

Throwing the paper angrily to the side she stalked from the room.

Entering the kitchen Hermione sat down and cried.

For how long she cried she didn't know; only that the sound of someone behind her made her turn round, wand in her hand ready to hex the person into eternity.

“I thought you would be here. There are fifty thousand galleons on your head, you know, for whoever brings you in. Top news, breaking out of Azkaban like you did.”

“In first year which spell did I use when you tried to stop me, H...H...and my friends from leaving the common room in the middle of the night?” Her wand was now pointed straight in the newcomers face,

“You said you were really, really sorry before casting a full body bind on me.”

Hermione lowered her wand and threw herself at Neville, crying both with sadness at the brokenness in his eyes as well as happiness that she had finally found someone who she knew and loved.

Neville held onto her just as hard as she held onto him: as if both were trying to convince themselves the other was real.

Pulling away finally Neville gave something close to a smile and said,

“Come on, I’m taking you to Sanctuary. You’ll be safer there than here. We had to abandon it after we found there was a spy in our mists.” He held out his hand and Hermione held onto it.

After feeling the usual uncomfortable feeling of being forced headfirst down a narrow tube Hermione found herself in a clearing deep in a forest somewhere.

“Where are we?”

“Nottingham,” Neville answered, “It was safer to get as far away from London as possible.”

He led her away off to the side and through various thickets and bushes until they reached another clearing before going over to a bush which, now Hermione saw after Neville had taken his wand and lowered the wards, a huge hole big enough to fit a fully grown man leading downwards into the ground.

“Come on.”

Hermione followed him down into a large circular room where about fifty people were standing or sitting, waiting for them.

“Hermione!” A tall blond haired girl came running towards her and enveloped her in a hug,

“Lavender!” Lavender released her and she looked around.

Faces, some she recognised and some she didn’t, were smiling at her and suddenly Hermione felt happier than she had in ages.

She had finally come home.

Hermione's escape from Azkaban seemed the only thing the entire school could talk about.

Questions flew every which way: how did she escape from a supposedly inescapable fortress? How did she get past the dementors? Was she as insane as the papers said and, if so, where was she headed and what was she capable of?

The papers said she was capable of anything but as the Daily Prophet was under Ministry control what it printed wasn't the most reliable of resources.

Adonia was pouring over the latest news concerning Granger when Josie came and sat down next to her at the breakfast table.

“Read this,” Adonia pushed the paper towards her.

The public are warned that the mudblood Granger may try and get to Hogwarts. Parents are reassured by the ministry that the chances of her getting in are extremely slim, though to put parents minds at rest and show that Hogwarts students are the ministry's first priority the ministry will be installing new security measures around the school.

Mr D Yaxley, head of the Magical Law enforcement, said yesterday in a press conference,

“Although the threat towards Hogwarts is minimal as we have the best teachers Britain can offer there to protect the students, the ministry recognises the parents concerns and therefore will be installing new safety measures until Granger is caught and given the kiss.”

When asked what these new safety measure were, Mr Yaxley said,

“Posting dementors at the entrances of the secret passage ways as well as at the gates; posting Aurors round the school as well as giving the best magical protection spells the ministry can offer. Parent's shouldn't worry.”

Parents are also advised by the ministry not to fuss as it may create chaos within the school and problems for the teachers.

Any queries parents may have, a special department has been set up with Dolores Umbridge as its head... (Story continues on page 5)

Josie threw the paper down in disgust and pressed her thumb onto her plate with slightly more force than necessary.

One sausage, a small piece of bacon and half a glass of pumpkin juice appeared.

Cutting a tiny piece of sausage she popped it into her mouth and chewed slowly.

Adonia had gone back to the paper and was reading the story inside.

“What do you suppose she did to get sentenced three life sentences?” Josie asked thoughtfully for none of the story’s she had read in the paper about Granger had said anything about why she had been sentenced in the first place.

“I don’t know, it doesn’t say anything here,” Adonia replied absently.

Josie sighed and cut herself another tiny piece of sausage before placing it in her mouth.

“How do you think she did it? Escape I mean,” Josie asked

Adonia sighed. Josie had to have asked the same question at least a hundred times in the past three days since Granger had been reported missing.

“I don’t know Josie, I’ve told you.”

“Well yeah, but it is interesting, isn’t it? I mean no one has ever escaped before and she was a ‘Class A’ criminal so she would have had maximum security...” Josie’s musings trailed off as she finished

her single sausage and took a large gulp on her pumpkin juice; half draining it.

Suddenly a large flurry came from overhead,

“Mail’s here,” Josie said unnecessarily

Adonia sent her an annoyed look but was refrained from commenting by a large white owl dropping a bulky package in front of her.

Josie, looking over to see what it was, was surprised when Blast swooped down and dropped a letter on her half clean plate.

Frowning and wondering what was wrong as her mother never wrote to her she opened it and read it, only to gasp and drop the letter from shock.

“What’s wrong?” Adonia asked, turning her attention away from the new robes she had ordered and looking over at Josie.

Josie merely looked at the paper as if it were about to bite her.

Adonia picked it up,

“May I?” she asked to which Josie just nodded.

Adonia started reading,

Josephine,

As you know the ministry is introducing a new program which enables pureblood bachelors to find appropriate wives. At the moment they are just testing it out to see how well it works.

The minister, Mr Malfoy, has contacted me and asked if I would be interested in marrying again to carry on the pure-blooded line of the O’Rylie’s

Naturally I agreed and the match the ministry has made for me is no other than to the prestigious William White; not only giving me a chance to redeem myself in the eyes of pureblood society but also my family name.

I understand how you must feel about gaining a new pureblood step father with your blood status but I want you to know he has given me his word that he will look after and provide for you regardless of who your father was.

Another reason I am marrying him is because of your behaviour at school these last few months and the letters I have received show me that growing up without a father figure in your life and no discipline has had a bad effect on you which William assures me will be rectified in due course.

I expect you home in the Easter holidays to meet him and we will be married in the second week of Easter holidays which you will be my bridesmaid for.

Until then I expect to hear nothing more of bad behaviour, answering back to your teachers and silly childish pranks. Honestly Josephine you are a getting a bit old for pranks now.

Anyway, work hard and keep your head down.

All my love,

Mother

Adonia let out a long low whistle before looking at Josie who had her head in her hands and looked close to tears.

“I’m sorry Jose, really I am.”

And she was. Being a half blood with a pureblood mother and pureblood step father was the most undesirable position one could wish for.

Not only would she been treated as a second class citizen by her step father and his social circle; but her own mother would be expected to treat her as such as well.

Aside from that, Josie would not inherit anything and would be dependant on any half brothers of sisters she had for the rest of her life.

As the Whites were a dark family through and through Josie would be better off in a camp. At least there she wouldn't be treated as if she might taint them with her 'dirty blood'. Her mother must know this.

"She might as well have told me she had ordered my death sentence," Josie sobbed.

Adonia was disconcerted. She had never seen Josie cry; even when she had been sentenced to two weeks worth of detention with Nott she had never cried.

And yet her mother tells her she is marrying into one of the most notoriously dark families there was and Josie breaks down.

"This is why we have to fight Josie, against this oppression," Adonia urged in a small whisper.

Josie sniffed and wiped her hand across the back of her eyes to dry them.

"But she must know what this marriage would do to me," Josie blurted out suddenly, re scanning the letter. "No, I know what she's doing. She thinks that by marrying this bloke I won't fight anymore which will then keep me alive so she won't lose me. I can't believe her," she finished on a dark whisper.

"I don't think she did it on purpose Josie; she says Mr Malfoy asked her; in reality I wouldn't be surprised if they threatened you to get her to marry him."

“She knows I can handle myself?” though it was said as a question more than a statement.

Taking the letter in her hand she placed it in her bag; intending to burn it as soon as possible.

“Josie, you are the leader of a rebellion that goes against everything the teachers, ministry and dark lord stand for, you are the ones along with the upper years that is responsible for everyone suddenly becoming very, very good at Dark Arts and why, all of a sudden, graffiti made from dark arts themselves are dotted round school, the reason people answer back and get multiple detentions....”

“Alright I get it!” Josie snapped.

Adonia smiled,

“Which is why she is looking out for you in the best way possible in her very limited options: defy the ministry and you get killed. Agree and they’ll let you live under surveillance.”

“Right,” Josie said miserably.

“Blood Studies first,” Adonia said after consulting her timetable that she carried religiously everywhere, “you ready for the test?”

“No.”

“Have you even picked up the textbook to revise?”

“No.”

“You realise that if you fail you’ll get a detention.” This was said more as an act to get Josie to revert back to normal speech, instead of monosyllables,

“Yes.”

“Do you care?”

“No.”

Giving up Adonia walked out of the hall with Josie behind her up to the fifth floor corridor where the Blood Studies classroom was located.

The door flew open to reveal a thickset man with dirty blond hair. His features were screwed up to such an extent that his usually small features looked more piggish than usual: This was Rabastan Lestrange’s annoyed look.

“In. Now.”

Holding the door open the class walked in and sat at their respective desks.

“Before we start I just want to say that if anyone feels the need to cheek me, answer back, graffiti my walls either in my classroom or outside, curse various aspects of this room or me then I can promise you detentions until you leave school. Is that clear?”

Murmurs of ‘Yes Professor’ and ‘Yes sir’ echoed round the room.

“Right then; Bletchley, hand out these test papers.” Bletchley, a small wiry boy with black hair got up and, collecting the test papers from the front desk, proceeded to hand out.

“I will also add that if the answers on this test are anything like the last one,” he glared at the Griffindors, “then not only will you be placed on remedial classes three nights a week but you will also receive a detention for every question you get wrong. You may begin.”

Bletchley sat down and silence descended into the classroom where the only noise were quills scratching on parchment.

Josie, still depressed, stared at the first question.

In what year was Lucretia Black born?

Josie's mind drew a blank so she guessed

1918

'1 detention,' she thought to herself as she knew that answer to be wrong. It was around that time though the exact date was unknown to her mind.

How old was Hendsworth Yaxley when he married Gordia Rosier and what year was it?

This was a waste of time, Josie thought, because in all honesty who cares?

Suddenly Josie was struck with inspiration. Why not show them that you didn't give a damn about who married who and who was related to whom in the most creative way possible?

Hendsworth Yaxley was a thousand years old when he married the inbred Gordia Rosier on the planet mars with a centaur taking the ceremony

Satisfied Josie moved on to the next question,

In what year did the Nott's make the alliance with the Rivers?

1921 was the right answer.

Josie put down: 987BC by exchanging blood with a unicorn. They were cursed to a life full of incest and inbreeding with many squibs in-between

Which well known wizard did the Morgan's last known daughter marry in the fifteenth century?

I don't know. My teacher is so inbred his brains are like mushy peas so he is incapable of transferring this useless piece of information to me

And on it went with Josie getting more and more creative in her answers.

Rabastan looked over the class from his place at the front desk and was pleased to see Burns writing furiously.

He had heard her mother was to marry William White and the news must have come today. No wonder she had looked so depressed when entering the classroom

But now it seemed she was working on making her now appalling grades higher in an effort to please her new step father to be.

Smiling he settled back, certain he wasn't going to get any more problems from her.

Leaving the classroom an hour later Adonia asked Josie how she felt the test went.

"I don't know. I made the answers up as I really didn't care which wizard married which witch in what year."

Adonia actually stopped,

"You did what?"

"I showed them how thrilling I found their subject by saying that Merlin married Thomas Ashwood in a same sex marriage."

"You serious?"

"Yes."

Adonia didn't know whether to be horrified at the amount of detentions Josie would undoubtedly receive or burst out laughing and congratulate her on her nerve.

Opting for the later she clapped Josie on her back and said simply,

“Well Done. You’ll get full marks.”

Both giggling they made their way down to the dungeons for potions.

Rabastan was angry. NO, angry was too light a word; feral would be a better description.

The past three weeks had been filled with detentions, back talkers, cheek givers, mostly from Gryffindor, though nobody had dared mock the ancestry of purebloods...until now.

Storming down to the staff room with the air of a man ready to kill anyone or anything that got in his way he threw open the door with surprising strength so that the door frame actually moved a few inches and succeeded in making the staffroom fall silent, he roared,

“NOTT!”

Nott stepped forward,

“What is it, Rabastan?”

“ Read this! READ IT!” Nott calmly took the test paper from Rabastan and started reading it; his eyebrows rising further and further up his forehead.

“What happened little brother?” Rodolphus stepped forwards from the fire,

“BURNS IS WHAT HAPPENED!”

“Calm down and explain from the beginning and then we’ll decided what to do.”

“I had the fourth years today and gave them my annual test. Burns was writing happily away and I thought she was trying to up her recent marks...until now when I came to mark them. She has mocked my subject in the worst way possible, not to mention my intelligence!”

Snatching the test paper from Nott who had gotten half way through the paper Rabastan shoved it at his older brother.

Rodolphus read it with a calm face. When he had finished he looked at his panting-in-anger brother and the now completely silent staffroom and tutted,

“Tut Tut; we really can’t have this. I will write a letter to William White and her mother informing them of this new problem. I will also enclose a copy of this test. Until then deal with her as you see fit.”

“Detention until leaving school then,” Rabastan said widely,

“I said deal with her; not kill her. I don’t think White will take kindly to his future step daughter calling his ancestor-” Rodolphus checked the paper, “-a ten footed mutant.’ He won’t like you if you deprive him of his fun in correcting her.”

Rabastan glared at his brother and then the rest of the staff who were nodding their agreement like mindless dogs.

“Until then I suggest you just give her two...longer detentions with a blood quill and chains.”

“Eh?” Rabastan had not inherited the brains of the family.

“Be creative I mean.”

“Oh!”

Slightly mollified Rabastan poured himself a coffee while the talked around him resumed; mostly about Granger and what the ministry were going to do about it.

Josie’s rebellious answers spread round the school like wildfire and it influenced many students to twist facts with fiction and become more creative in various classes.

Avery, who taught History of Famous Purebloods, was marking essays only to find that Mordred the Great was now in-fact called by fifty percent of the class Mordred the Morbid.

Snape found that after each potions lesson the Slytherins potions, which were usually up to standards, were always ruined right from his firsties to year sevens by...various other class members throwing things into the cauldrons.

James Law was caught and when asked he just said,

“I was being creative professor.”

His creativity earned him two nights detention.

In Muggle Studies Alecto found the words ‘Muggles are filth’ which was always on the board now read ‘Incest is filth’ and was irremovable either by magic or Filch scrubbing the muggle way.

Bellatrix left her Transfiguration lesson with her fifth years with acid green hair. It took five teachers to get it back to normal.

Creativity was rife at Hogwarts in the term leading up to the Easter Holidays and as Josie got on the train it was with more bruises than before but with a lighter, happier and more hopeful heart.

Thanks guys, please review. Hope you enjoyed this.... Oh and does anyone know if the chapters in stories are deleted when the life of the document runs out? Common sense tells me that they do but I'm not sure. Anyway thanks again xx

Josie sat opposite her future step father; each glaring at the other in a silent wills battle.

Josie's mother had just gone to put on the kettle for some more coffee and tea which Josie translated as get out of the tension filled room.

William White was a tall fair haired man in his mid fifties which was a decade older than her mother with an arrogant supreme air around him; his eyes were a sharp clear cold blue...like the artic.

Josie suppressed a shiver as they bore deeper into her.

“Here we go,” Josie’s mother re-entered holding a tray filled with a plate of biscuits, a now steaming white coffee pot and three cups on saucers.

“Thank you” William said.

“Thanks mum,” Josie said quietly.

“Well isn’t this nice,” Mary stated in an effort to calm the electrical tension in the room, “having tea like this.”

Josie snorted into her coffee, splattering it all over herself,

“Sorry,” she said in response to her mother’s sharp look and William’s disgusted one.

“That reminds me, Josephine, I have something for you,” William announced, pulling from his pocket a small wrapped up package and handing it towards her.

Josie made no move to take it. Knowing the White’s it was probably a cursed necklace or something.

“Josephine, please,” her mother’s voice sounded sharp.

Taking it Josie said dully,

“Thank you.”

“Your welcome; I have no doubt that you will find it useful in your studies,” he added as Josie opened it to reveal a smallish book on...ancestry.

Either it was coincidence or he had heard about her test which she had received a week’s worth of detentions with the blood quill and a T as her mark in very bold, red print.

“You will also find many facts about the White’s ancestry as well as a few other well known respected families in there. I also strongly recommend that you study it; it might take your mind off the...distractions you seem to favour; from what I have heard.”

No coincidence, then.

William drained his cup and stood up, picking up his black cane that he seemed to use more as an accessory to look good than because he needed it.

Mary stood up alongside him,

“I’ll be seeing you tonight then Mary...”

“Can’t you stay a bit longer?” Mary asked timidly.

“Oh no, I don’t think so: those half blood imbeciles that work in my department at the ministry need me there as they are prone to...make mistakes if I am not there. But then what else can you expect from mongrels like them?

Josie gave him her best glare,

“Well...” Mary started only to be given a quick kiss on the cheek.

“I will pick you up at seven tonight. Look presentable.” When Mary showed signs of showing him to the door he held up his hand in a gentlemanly way, “Now, now Mary, I don’t need you to show me out; I know the way.”

Josie glared at his retreating back and fought down the urge to throw the book at his arrogant head.

After the door had clicked shut Mary turned to Josie,

“You could have made a bit of an effort you know?”

“So could he, but I didn’t see you telling him that,” Josie responded dryly

Her response was a sentence to do the washing up.

After the last cup was put on the washing board to dry, Josie walked into the lounge where her mother was writing a letter to someone; no doubt to the dressmakers to see when Josie’s dress was going to come through.

Sighing heavily and ignoring her mother’s warning glare; Josie walked up the stairs to her room which was all packed up for the move to White Estate after wedding, which was to take place at the end of the week.

Today had been her third meeting with her step father and Josie found that each meeting she liked him less and less. Currently she was beginning to dread being in the same room with him and she could tell he felt it too.

His snide comments about half bloods she could handle as she got them constantly at school, though her mother’s submissive nods and acceptance of his hate hurt more.

She felt like pouring her heart out in a letter write to Adonia, though Josie would be seeing her at the wedding as the Osborne’s were a respected family even if they had slight blood traitor tendencies and

so were invited to one of the first arranged marriages the ministry were behind.

All the important families would be there along with the high ministry officials, the teachers and headmaster of Hogwarts, the minister himself and his family along with the press.

Josie had a horrible feeling that she would be the only half blood there, though Adonia's presence would just make it tolerable.

Abandoning the idea of writing to her friend Josie lay down on her bed and slowly dozed off.

The alarm clock on her bedside table woke her and Josie woke to find she had slept in her clothes which were now all crumpled.

Dragging herself up and running a hand through her hair, Josie walked out of her room and down the stairs, following the smells to the kitchen.

Her mother was standing at the stove, making pancakes dressed in new green robes with silver lining. She was humming to herself

Josie eyed her critically. Her mother never made pancakes, she never wore something so expensive so early in the morning if ever and the last time she had heard her mother hum was when she had been really small...when her dad had been alive.

“What’s the occasion?”

“William’s coming over for breakfast before work...”

“So he’s got you acting as a house elf, now, has he?” Mary shot Josie an annoyed look.

“I want you to be civil today Josie; the wedding is only two days away and I don’t want to live in a war zone for the rest of my life....”

“High hopes mother, considering he is everything dad hated in wizard kind and I’m everything he hates in wizard kind. I believe he used the term ‘mongrel’ yesterday.”

“He didn’t mean it towards you. He just has some incompetent people working under him...”

“Half bloods?”

“I didn’t say that Josephine,” Josie noted the use of her full name, “What I meant is he is quite stressed at the moment...”

“And having a half blood for a daughter will really lower his stress levels.” Josie had decided to make her mother see sense. Currently she had been acting as if blood wasn’t an issue, when clearly it was. Josie was just trying to jolt her mother back to reality.

“Josephine, if you constantly act like this...”

“Like what?”

“Like this...Difficult...Josie I want this marriage to work and I want you to get the best you can out of it....”

“Not a lot then?” Josie replied sarcastically.

Mary seemed about to reply but the sound of the front door closing and heavy footsteps stopped her,

“Let yourself in why don’t you?” Josie muttered.

Her mother ignored her and smiled as William entered the room.

“I have pancakes on. Make yourself at home.”

William, however, took her wrists in his hands and moved her away from the stove.

“Let the girl do it.” Although it was said in a softly seductive way Josie picked up the steel note of command behind it.

Her mother obviously did too for she turned and smiled at Josie,

“Josie?”

Josie placed down the cereal box that she was holding and grumpily dragged herself over to the stove while William escorted her mother to the breakfast table.

“I had fun last night Will...” oh, so it was Will now, Josie thought sarcastically; as she flipped the pancakes.

“Me too, pet, now I want to take you out tonight in The Diamond Room...the robes will be delivered later today...”

“I’ll need a babysitter,” Mary said with a look towards Josie,

“The girl’s twelve, she can look after herself.”

“I’m fourteen,” Josie couldn’t help correcting in a derogatory voice.

Mary shot her a warning look though William just smiled condescendingly,

“Of course; forth year Rodolphus said, that’s right. Well that would be Mr Lestrange to you of course. But yes Mary,” he turned back to her mother, “at fourteen she can look after herself.”

“She has a name,” Josie snapped back.

“Josephine that is enough,” her mother barked at her from the table where she was sitting with William.

William himself was staring at her with an unblinking intense stare. Josie stared back.

William gave a cruel smirk,

“Rodolphus was right. This little mongrel does need a firm leash.”

“William...” Mary started but he flapped his hand up and down to shut her up,

“Not now my pet,” the my pet was said exactly the same way Rodolphus had said it to Bellatrix and Josie wondered if the term ‘my pet’ was the new ‘in’ in pureblood society.

William turned back to her,

“But you do know what they say about a family: a perfect mother and father and well bred children...then the family pet mongrel; neither fish nor foul. A mixture of both, an insult to nature; as one bad seed can corrupt an entire tree, as the Dark Lord is fond of saying...”

“Josie, go to your room now,” Mary jumped in when it looked like Josie was going to throw the pancakes at his face.

Putting the pancakes on a plate Josie placed them in front of William, made an elaborate curtsy which wiped the smirk off his face before flouncing off upstairs.

Getting up to her room Josie slammed the door before throwing herself on her bed and sobbing into her pillow from the cruel barbs that William had thrown at her.

But it was true, she reflected, in the current situation: a pure-blooded mother, a pure-blooded step father and pure-blooded half siblings...and the mongrel.

Big fat tears dripped down her chin, soaking the pillow as she fell into the depths of self pity.

Then, suddenly, like a slap in the face, Adonia’s words came back to her:

“This is why we have to fight, Josie, against the oppression.”

Sitting up and wiping her hands across her eyes to dry them she sniffed and hiccuped a bit before managing to get her tears under control.

Downstairs she heard William’s voice talking to her mother, though his words were muffled by the ceiling.

Screaming loudly into her pillow she pummelled her covers with her fists in an effort to lose her anger.

Bastard, Bastard, Bastard...oh she hated him and his kind.

Neither fish nor foul indeed.

In that moment Josie really wanted to do something horrendously impulsive...like maybe run away? No, only cowards ran away and Josie was not a coward.

How about burn all his best robes when he was out at work one day? Or, cut them up; even better!

Josie flopped back onto her bed, her burst of energy leaving just as quickly as it had come as common sense drove itself home.

It would be better to channel her energy into the rebellion at school as the more letters her step father received; the more it would anger him that he couldn’t punish her himself.

Of course, he would in the holidays, but during term time...Josie grinned to herself and picked up a piece of parchment before scribbling furiously plans for the next term.

William was having a few drinks with some ‘old friends’ the night before his wedding.

The minister, the Lestrange brothers and various others he knew through the Dark Lord’s inner circle were there.

No Bellatrix though. It was a lad's night out.

"So, what do you think of your new step daughter to be?" Rodolphus asked with a sly look on his face after Malfoy had finished telling one of his very unfunny mudblood jokes that they had all heard at least ten times before.

William took a large gulp of his Firewhiskey and sighed,

"You were right Rodolphus; she needs a firm hand..."

"A firm leash more like: Don't go treating that half blood as a human..." Rabastan snapped, still sore from the test and 'creative' answers the girl had given.

William smiled,

"Oh I have no intention of doing that. In my house she will learn her place, the hard way if nothing else; it is just her mother that needs to be taught the correct way of thinking..."

"Her mother is of no consequence; merely a tool the Dark Lord is using to carry on the two lines," Rodolphus corrected

"Easily disposable," Rabastan added to his brother's comment.

William's eyes glinted strangely, as a wintry smile graced his features

"I see..."

Lucius smiled.

"Good. I was afraid that you were getting slightly too attached to the woman..."

"She is a filthy delusional blood traitor. If it wasn't for carrying on the lines then I would never have considered marrying her. She seems to be under the impression that I will actually welcome her mongrel

daughter into my house with open arms; ready to play happy families. It was a mistake I rectified the other day.”

“And her response was...?” Lucius asked, curiosity winning over his usual non-caring demeanour.

“Her response was accepting silence. I will house the girl and give her the right amount of food for one such as her; but I will also ensure that she is put in her place and knows who her superiors are. When she turns sixteen she will be on the first train to indentured servitude abroad where I may never have to see her face again.”

This earned lots of grins from the lads who gave another toast to putting half bloods in their places before getting the next round in and went on to talking about the new situation with Granger.

None of the group spied the hooded cloaked figure sitting in the corner with hawk like chocolate brown eyes.

Hehe, a cliffy. Hope you enjoyed this guys: please review thanks xx

Josie and James Law crept silently down the deserted hallway, each holding assortments varying from dung bombs to fireworks; (something which the pure blooded students of the TA had kindly donated.)

James peeked round the corner which hosted the Dark Arts, Dark Charms and History of Famous Purebloods classrooms.

Two Slytherin Prefects were there with Avery and Carrow standing at the bottom of the corridor.

Perfect.

James grinned and pulled his head back.

“Two Snakes and two teachers,” he reported in a small whisper.

Josie nodded.

Pulling back a tapestry and opening a secret door, she slipped inside a deserted room; James following her.

Placing their goods on the floor Josie took a deep breath.

What she was about to do would not only get her in trouble with the teachers, headmaster but also William, the bastard.

“Are you ready?” she asked James who nodded affirmative.

Taking another deeper breath Josie opened the door, slipped out of the tapestry and, placing a mask of complete indifference on her face, calmly walked round the corner whistling.

The conversation between the prefects and the teacher ceased immediately as their heads swivelled round, to see who it was that was breaking curfew.

Avery's eyes narrowed as soon as he saw Josie looking at a painting of trolls and wizards battling.

That girl was trouble with a capital T. Of course he had been at William's wedding and had assumed that William would get the girl in line before school started so he himself wouldn't have to deal with any more of her creativity in her tests.

When she had entered the school a few days ago she had looked more battered and bruised than she had when she left. Avery had thought that the beating she had received at William's hands would have got the message across.

Evidently the message had not been received.

Striding over to the girl with Amycus and the prefects behind him he barked,

“White, what are you doing?”

To his immediate annoyance Josie chose to ignore him.

“WHITE!”

Again no response

“WHITE, THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING!” He had grabbed the girl and swung her round to face him.

“Oh sorry sir, were you speaking to me?” Josie asked innocently

Avery's small round face resembled a beetroot as his blood levels got scarily high.

“Do you be insolent to me White?”

“I'm sorry sir, what did you call me?” Josie asked with just enough confusion in her voice to make it seem genuine.

“White, your name is White.”

“No sir, my step father’s name is White. My name is Burns. William is not my father, James Burns is,” Josie answered calmly, as if talking about the weather.

Avery’s face went from purple, to white, to a deep unhealthy red in the space of a minute.

“Excuse me...”

“What are you doin up Burns?” Amicus took over, seeing where this was heading and wanting to know why she was up rather than her preference on what she was to be called.

“I just wanted to take a walk sir,” Josie answered, as if it were perfectly natural to want to take a walk after midnight when everyone else was in bed.

“Then Burns, you can just walk wiv me to me office, you little mongrel...”

“I’m sorry sir, I’m afraid I can’t do that.”

“Why?” Amicus demanded; his face going the same colour as Avery’s.

“Because the real reason I came down here was to do this...” Pulling from her pocket a small dusty bottle and throwing its contents over the two teachers Josie ran.

Covered in stink sap both teachers took out their wands and fired spells at her which missed narrowly before taking off at a run.

“HELP! HELP!!” Josie screamed as she ran past the tapestry.

As if on cue: fireworks exploded from behind the tapestry and banged, exploded, whizzed and cart wheeled all over the third floor.

Avery, Carrow and the two prefects, Joel Goyle and Joseph Malfoy, stopped at the suddenness of it; giving Josie time to dart round

another corner and through a ‘wall’ to where Jamie and Trevor were waiting;

“How did it go?” Jamie asked her.

“Good. Good,” Josie gasped.

“And Law?”

“Still back there; He offered to do the fireworks on the way down.”

“He’ll get most of the flack...”

“Only if he’s caught Trev,” Josie interrupted, then, gasping some more, added “Let’s go.”

The three of them hurried down the hallway and split up to go to their respective common rooms.

Meanwhile in the headmaster’s office, Rodolphus was sitting behind his desk, staring at Law intently.

“And what, Law, give you the right to set off fireworks in the middle of the night in my school?”

“I just wanted to have a bit of fun sir.”

“You call setting of magically charmed fireworks in the corridor, disrupting the patrol rota and upsetting my staff ‘a bit of fun’?”

James looked down, a look of deep ‘shame’ on his face.

“I’m sorry sir, it won’t happen again.”

James wasn’t worried about dying. Oh no, he had been waiting for ages for this opportunity to fight back. He was just worried about Josie and the others if he died.

Over the months he had come to view Josie as a little sister and become very protective over her which was why he had volunteered to light the fireworks.

“I hear young Miss Burns was up and about as well, having...fun. The incidents wouldn’t be connected at all, would they? Because if, for whatever reason, I thought they were, then I would have no choice but to write to her step father telling him of her appalling behaviour and my extreme displeasure, at not only being woken up at a ridiculous hour; but also at her disruption in my school.”

James looked up and noticed the portraits behind the headmaster’s desk which had all started crying out in protest. One stood out especially: a tall white bearded man with long white hair and twinkling blue eyes.

James tore his gaze away from the portrait,

“I can assure you sir that I had no idea that Burns was up tonight...”

“Even though, coincidentally, you were on the same floor and the fireworks went off as soon as she started running...and now she has been found by Professor Nott in the Gryffindor tower, out of breath?”

James swallowed the lump in his throat,

“I had no idea sir...”

Rodolphus looked behind James at Avery, whose face had a nasty burn across his cheek where a firework had hit him, and whose robes were stained with stink sap, was glaring at James with an intense hatred.

“Isn’t it funny, Professor, how Gryffindors stick together and have to do the noble thing by taking the blame on themselves and intensifying their own punishment by lying?”

“Yes headmaster, I think it’s hilarious,” though his tone of voice was far from hilarity; more bordering on deep maliciousness.

“Professor Carrow has expressed an interest to punish the girl himself. Naturally I will be writing to her step father but if you would like to punish the boy...”

“I certainly would, Rodolphus,” Avery snapped, his temper getting the better of him as he never took his eyes off James.

“Very well: take the boy now and do whatever you need to do to ensure this doesn’t happen again. Dismissed.”

Avery grabbed James arms and dragged him from the headmaster’s office, down the swirly staircase and towards his office with very imaginative ideas for torture coming to mind.

After Josie was released two days later from Carrow’s office she found the school abuzz with what happened.

It seemed that although no one had been there aside from the prefects and teachers everyone knew about it: though some details seemed to be a bit off: like how a stray firework had caught Professor Avery’s robes and carried him high up into the deep ceilings of the castle and dropped him, and the only reason he only had a burn was because he had cast an abbreviation of the cushioning charm.

“White!” This time Josie responded to Bellatrix’s shrill voice.

“Yes ma’am?”

“The headmaster wants to see you. He has a visitor waiting with him.” The smile on Bellatrix face was pure evil.

Grabbing the girl’s arm and ignoring her small cry of pain Josie was escorted up to the headmaster’s office.

Reaching the door Bellatrix gave a sharp rap with her knuckles before pushing it open.

What Josie saw inside made her heart stop for a moment.

Sitting in front of the headmaster's desk was William in deep conversation with the headmaster.

They stopped when Bellatrix and Josie entered the room and William gave her his best glare before standing up,

“I have heard some very displeasing news Josephine.”

Josie just stared at her hands and didn't respond,

“Rodolphus, I think it would be better if you left the girl alone with me. I ensure she behaves...”

After a few minutes of considering, Rodolphus nodded before getting up and walking towards the door.

“Bellatrix. Follow me.” The headmaster voice was sharp and clipped. Bellatrix trailed after him sulkily, slamming the door behind her: leaving Josie and William together in the small room.

The silence stretched on and on though Josie was not going to break it. This was one of William's methods: letting the silence go on and on, allowing it to become so charged that she would break and start babbling.

Not this time though.

“Josephine, I am very disappointed in your behaviour.” The words, said so quietly, but filled with malice.

“Not only have you brought shame on your mother and me, but, from what I have heard, you have disowned the noblest name of White.” He was being too calm, too conversational.

Josie waited for the storm to hit,

“Like I said I am disappointed, very disappointed.” From his pocket he retrieved his wand.

Josie flinched then tensed but William ignored her before continuing,

“Not that it matters mind you, after all you are only a filthy disobedient mongrel half blood. Manners can, and will, be taught at any cost. Your Place in this world can, and will, also be taught without hesitation.”

Josie concentrated on not panicking and keeping her breathing under control. This was leading up to something, she could tell.

“But like I said it doesn’t matter so much. It takes time and effort to achieve perfection but in the meantime I will leave the teaching up to your teachers.”

He gave her a look, while fiddling with his wand almost absently.

Josie kept one eye on his and the other on his wand.

To say she was surprised when he laughed would give a disservice to the word understatement.

Though the laugh wasn’t filled with humour; it was more like cruel bark.

“But I’m not making myself clear, am I Josephine? You came up here expecting me to Crucio you until you lost your mind. No, no; what I am about to tell you will be far more satisfying,” he paused for dramatic effect, “Your mother is pregnant with my children, triplets to be specific, so you see I have no need to bother about you anymore. I have heirs to carry on both lines and you, well; your new position will be nothing more than the family dog. Your mother supports me in this”

His grin made her feel sick.

“I don’t believe you,” Josie forced out.

William just grinned wider, reminding Josie of a Chester cat.

“I thought you wouldn’t” he replied softly, though instead of the soothing effect it carried more danger than if he had yelled, “Which is why I took it upon myself to get your mother to write you this,” he threw her a letter with her name written upon it in her mother’s scrawl.

Josie looked up at him,

“Well open it. The look on your face will keep me in a good mood for weeks,” he mocked cruelly

Josie opened it slowly, took out the letter; unfolded it and read

Josephine,

As William may have told you I am pregnant with triplets: two boys and one girl the healer said.

As my daughter from my previous shameful marriage, William has kindly decided to keep you on until you reach your seventeenth birthday; where upon you will be sent abroad to stay with some wizards William knows.

I am assured that they will take good care of you; and as I am carrying the White and O’Rylie heirs then I am obliged not only by law, but also by sense of duty, to stay with William as his wife to raise them accordingly.

Also as a half blood in an pure blooded family, the law firmly dictates that you shall have no portion of the inheritance nor be recognised by the family once you reach the majority.

William has assured your safety by sending you abroad, as I have said above.

I am telling you this as I feel you have a right to know your new status in the household.

There will be no need to write back and I hope the only owls we receive about you are from the headmaster informing us of your improved behaviour

Sincerely,

Your mother

It didn't even sound like her mother. It sounded like some heartless, cruel, cold, emotionally detached disaster of a person. If it hadn't been her mother's handwriting with no visible signs that it tore at her to write this, then Josie would never have believed it.

The rejection of it weighed heavily upon her heart, breaking it into a hundred thousand pieces. Tears filled her eyes and spilled over onto her cheeks. Oh he was cruel, William was.

In that moment Josie really wanted to kill him where he stood, she hated him so much for what he had done to her mother.

Of course, she had never had a fantastic relationship with her mother but Josie had always hoped that, deep down, her mother scolded her because she really cared about her daughter...but now this cold dismissive rejection letter confirmed her deepest fear...and calling her marriage to her dad shameless...was that how she viewed her? As a shameful piece of evidence that was to be hidden at all cost?

The tears fell faster and Josie found that she couldn't stay in the same room as William for much longer.

Still holding the letter Josie ran out of the office, crying hysterically.

Right now she was meant to be in History of Famous Purebloods though Josie didn't think she could handle it, and so ran and ran until she reached the astronomy tower.

Being midday it would be deserted; until tonight that was when the older students would come up about midnight, with Professor Dolohov, to study the stars.

Shutting the door to the classroom she hid behind a display board of the constellations and cried, not noticing she still held the crumpled letter in her hand.

This was how James found her at the end of the day after dinner, the only difference being that she had stopped crying and started rocking herself.

Sitting down next to her and holding her to him, as sometimes it was nice to be just held, he was barely surprised when the waterworks started up again. Murmuring to her that everything was going to be okay.

When Josie shoved the letter into his hands after fifteen minutes of crying into his robes, he read it in shock. Placing the letter to the side she made circular motions on her back while murmuring more meaningless words.

"It'll be okay Josie, don't worry. We'll pull through," though as he said it he had to wonder: would they?

Okay, please don't kill me. I know this chapter was slightly depressive but it's really just a plot device to keep the story going. The letter and this scene plays a major part in the upcoming chapters; I also know Josie's getting a bit of stick here but it'll all be worth it later; besides it finished okay, with a friend to support her...I won't say any more lol. Anyway, hope you enjoyed it. Please review.

Neville walked down the tunnel which housed the bedrooms and through a door at the far end which led into a lounge area.

A small circular room decorated in earthy colours it had a few settees, a few armchairs, a roaring fireplace with walls covered from ceiling to floor with pictures of people they had loved and lost one way or another.

The photos were a new addition to the once cosy room; Hermione's way of firing everyone else up to start fighting again, to help remind them why they had to keep fighting.

Moving pictures of Harry, Ginny, Terry Boot, Ron, Fleur and Bill, the twins and the rest of the Weasleys were only a few of the many people that waved down at him as he entered.

Ignoring them Neville searched the room with his eyes until he found what he was looking for: a head of bushy brown, greying slightly now, hair just visible from the top of the armchair.

Narrowing his eyes Neville stomped further into the room, his original bad mood worsening as he saw what Hermione was reading: Advanced Defence Spells: How to outwit your opponent.

“Hermione, we need to talk,” his voice barely held back the anger he was feeling.

Hermione lowered the book and marked her page before placing it to the side. Sighing she asked,

“What’s wrong now Neville? Is this about...”

“This is about Ernie!”

Hermione’s face became confused,

“What about him?”

“Ever since you came back from that blasted pub a few months ago all he can talk about is fighting back...”

“So what? It’s good to give people hope.”

Her chocolate brown eyes narrowed dangerously at what Neville was implying,

Neville chose to ignore them,

“Nearly everyone is talking about fighting back. I can’t walk into a room without hearing the words ‘The DA is reforming’ or ‘Hermione will lead us in that plan’...ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?” he finished on a frustrated yell when he saw that Hermione had picked up her book and resumed reading it.

“Neville we have had this discussion at least a hundred times before. I’ve told you that you don’t have to get involved,” here she lowered her book and locked eyes with him, “though to be honest I would have thought you of all people...”

“Well you thought wrong,” Neville snapped, his usually pale round face turning an ugly red and his eyes unusually bright, “I lost enough the last time around.”

He turned from the room and Hermione watched him go, feeling a mixture of pity and anger in her chest.

Neville stopped by the door and spoke without turning around,

“Do what you want Hermione, just don’t expect me to help.” Before she could reply Neville had left the room with defeat in every line of his body.

Adonia Osborne watched as Professor Selwyn raised the birch cane and brought it whistling down on Josie’s hands.

Ever since she had got back from the common room two weeks ago after missing a full day of lessons, as well as meals, she had become...reckless.

Before she had talked back but there had always been a line which she wouldn't cross in order to protect her mother if not herself.

Now, it seemed, that line no longer existed. Josie was sarcastic, sullen, sulky and to a point abusive when she spoke to the teachers or Slytherin Prefects...or any Slytherins for that matter.

The teachers themselves had given up on detentions as last Friday she had gained fifteen detentions in one day, so instead of punishing her after school they punished her during lessons; feeling that the humiliation of it would curb her better than a Crucio ever would.

Problem was, Josie didn't seem to neither know nor care about humiliation.

She had reverted in on herself, building a barrier that it seemed no one could break.

Of course she was civil to people she knew and liked; but always distant.

Rumours were circulating of course, but none came close to what actually happened. The most popular one was that Josie had taken to many crucios and had lost her mind.

Only two people knew the truth and that was James Law and Adonia. James had told Adonia after carrying a sobbing Josie back to the common room and sending her off up to bed.

The anger Adonia had felt was beyond words and since then she had created a boycott of the homework and worked extra hard in TA meetings.

All of it went over Josie's head.

Adonia was jerked out of her thoughts by Selwyn's angry voice,

“I SAID COUNT BURNS! ARE YOU DEAF AS WELL AS THICK YOU FILTHY HALF BREED? IF YOU DON’T COUNT I’LL JUST ADD A HUNDRED MORE TO THE FIRST TWENTY. WE’LL SEE WHOSE SULLEN THEN WON’T WE?

“NOW COUNT! FROM ONE AGAIN!”

“One,” Josie’s sullen voice came as the cane thrashed her already red raw hands

“Two.”

It went on and on until Josie got to fifteen; got sick of counting and just stopped.

Selwyn’s face resembled an overripe tomato.

“BURNS...”

“I’m not deaf, nor am I thick. I can count to twenty perfectly well; I just don’t want to,” Josie replied, breaking into what would probably be a long monologue of threats.

“And besides, you’re not my dad; you can’t tell me what to do.”

“No, but I know your father,” Selwyn snarled vindictively,

“White?” Josie’s face took on a picture of disgust, “That small insignificant piece of inbred scum isn’t worth my time,” she shot back.

Selwyn was so shocked at her nerve that he was rendered speechless for a full minute. The whole class waited with held breath for the eruption that was to come.

“OUT!” Selwyn pointed to the door, “OUT NOW! I’VE HAD ENOUGH! I’M SENDING YOU TO THE HEADMASTER TO DEAL WITH!”

Josie just shrugged and made her way over to her table to retrieve her things while Selwyn scribbled a note and, when Josie got back to the front, shoved it in her hand and watched with dangerous eyes as she left the room, looking even more furious as she slammed the door behind her so the frame rattled.

Turning back to the class with a look of pure death he re-began the lessons on Ancient Runes; ignoring the fact that three quarters of the lesson had been spent punishing Josie and they only had fifteen minutes left until the bell rang and school ended.

After giving them a mountain of homework on deciphering five pages of runes he dismissed them just as the bell rang.

Dumping her things in her dormitory Adonia went down to the great hall for dinner, not talking to anyone as worry gnawed in her gut.

Recently she had overheard the teachers talking about Josie and how easily dispensable she was...what if getting kicked out of a lesson was the excuse they needed?

Sitting down she pressed her thumb on her plate which filled with food: a medium sized chunk of Sheppard's pie with pies and carrots and full glass of pumpkin juice.

Halfway through dinner, when the hall was filled up, Rodolphus, red faced and panting brought in a screaming kicking Josie, holding her under his arm.

The whole hall fell so silent you could hear a pin drop.

A few teachers stood up to assist the headmaster though he stopped halfway along the Gryffindor table and dumped her on the bench,

“You are to stay there, Burns, until your step father comes to collect you. If you so much as move an inch you will be begging for death by the time I’m done with you.”

Then, leaving Josie where she was, he strode up towards the high table; his magnificent black and green robes billowing behind him.

Adonia ducked under the table and crawled over to where Josie was sitting now stock still in silence, and sat in a spare place opposite her as the chatter resumed,

“Jose?”

“Expelled.” The one word was said in a monotone and Adonia inwardly cringed. Her wand would be taken away from her if it hadn’t already been, and would be snapped in half. Then she would go back ‘home’ to possible death for the ‘shame’ she had brought on the family.

Adonia couldn’t let that happen.

Sparing a glance at the high table Adonia was pleased to see that they were not looking this way; so, quickly making a very rash decision, leaned over the table and whispered a very complex spell in the spare space next to Josie

“Get under the table and follow me.”

Josie looked in surprise at her ‘other self’ that had been created but didn’t comment as she quickly slid under the table and crawled to the end where, after Adonia checked that the teachers were looking the other way, cast a disillusion charm (something she had learned in the TA) on them, before walking the last few paces out of the hall with Josie behind her expecting at any minute to be stopped.

They weren’t and Adonia led Josie up to the seventh floor without banging into anyone,

“What was that spell you used?” Josie gasped from the run up.

“A doppelganger charm: took me ages to learn. It’ll look just like you and act exactly how you’ve been acting the past twenty four hours.

That one was a weak doppelganger; I haven't quite perfected the charm yet, so it'll last for probably forty- eight hours."

Josie goggled at her as Adonia quickly started pacing in front of a blank stretch of wall muttering under her breath.

A door materialized and Adonia pushed her in before following and closing the door and lighting a wand to reveal a huge cavernous room with shelves and shelves of things ranging from broomsticks to potions in cauldrons; from cupboards to statues; mountains of books almost reached the ceiling ranging on hundreds of topics: mostly forbidden.

"What..."

"Crap! I'm just nervous...I asked for a place to hide something...sorry Josie."

"It's alright. What's that?" Then, without waiting for an answer, she ran down an isle to what she saw as she got closer was merely a large cabinet with an ugly statue head with a tiara on it.

"Josie...we need to get out so we can change..."

"But this stuff," Josie replied, picking up a book on Advanced Potion Making which had been heavily annotated inside, "We can use it for the TA."

Adonia blinked. This was the first time in weeks that Josie had brought up the TA.

"Well I suppose...but Jose we need to get you out..."

"What's that?" Josie asked, pointing at the tiara seemly unconcerned about her upcoming doom if they were caught.

"Josie..."

“Adonia, we have the disillusionment charm cast over us,” Josie said in a strangely calm voice, “Not to mention when I am in that room you won’t be able to come in here unless I go out...it’s better that we grab what we can. Leave, change the room to more accommodating one and dump the stuff there and use that room for the TA. The room will provide.”

“How are you so calm?” Adonia asked in a highly frustrated voice, “I mean after being expelled...it’s as good as being executed....”

Adonia stopped as Josie locked eyes with her friend.

“When we started this thing we knew the risks. Jason was taken away, one of my best friends, for no reason other than the fact that he was half blood. We knew from the beginning that they would target me more than you...this just proves the theory and personally, I don’t know why you are so surprised,” Josie added as she turned back to the tiara.

On closer glance it Josie supposed it would have been beautiful...once though now it was coated with dust as the gold inlay was tarnished with dirt streaked across it.

Though it had a wired feeling about it, like some of the dark objects William had back at White manor.

She told as much to Adonia,

“So?”

“So we can use it against them,” Josie said, pocketing the tiara.

“Jose we need to get you out, somewhere safe....”

“What’s that?” Josie asked, pointing to a large gold picture frame which had just appeared behind them. Only instead of being hollow it seemed to have a real forest behind it...like another dimension portal type thingy, Josie thought in an amused way.

“The room always provides,” Adonia muttered from behind her.

Josie walked towards it, forgetting about the tiara for the moment and examining the frame.

Deciding that she was already as good as dead she decided to risk it in a truly spectacular Gryffindor way. Stepping through the frame her foot hit soft soil and she stepped through it fully.

Josie looked back through the frame into the room of hidden things and into Adonia stunned face.

“Wish me luck,” Josie said turning but stopping as an idea hit her, “And Adonia, thanks for everything. You’re a really great friend.” Managing a small smile for her best friend Josie started walking away, deep into the forest.

Adonia watched her go with mixed feelings: relief she was getting out of here; fear for her safety and complete shock and annoyance that Josie seemed to have no concern for her safety. Who was to say that the forest was any safer than here? It was probably shock, Adonia decided, and after everything that had happened Adonia was hardly surprised. Though letting Josie wander round an unknown forest by herself, in complete shock...recipe for disaster!

Letting out a small growl at what she was about to do Adonia took a deep breath and stepped through the portal and took off at a run after Josie.

Catching up with her Adonia swung her round and was half irritated to see Josie smiling smugly.

“What are you smiling at?” she asked irritably

“I knew you’d come. Friends don’t quit and you’re the best friend anyone could ask for.”

Then they were hugging, the enormity of the past hour catching up and both were crying with relief at being free from that prison they

were forced to call a school and from sadness of everything they had left behind.

Taking a deep breath and wiping her eyes Adonia looked at her best friend,

“We’ll be able to do more outside than inside.”

Before Josie could reply a man’s harsh voice from the shadows spoke,

“Don’t move. You have half a dozen wands pointed at you and we don’t care who we curse.”

A cliffy! Hehe! Hope you enjoyed this chapter: things are really moving on for Josie and Adonia. If anyone can guess who the speaker is I’ll give them a chocolate chip virtual cookie though to honest it isn’t really that difficult. But give it a shot, and I’ll tell you in the next chapter. Oh yeah and finally, press that little button below: the one that says review and leave one. The more you lovely readers review the faster I’ll update. I have eighteen reviews for this story; lets see if we can get it up to twenty five. Unreasonable? I think not. Go for it :) Anyway, thanks againxxx

Both girls froze at the sound of the voice.

“If you have wands hold them up and drop them now,” the voice, this time closer, came again.

Adonia held her walnut wand high and dropped it. Josie put her hand slowly into her robe pocket, retrieved her wand and mimicked Adonia.

Just as it hit the ground four hooded figures jumped from the bushes and knocked both girls to the ground.

Josie felt her hands being tied roughly behind her back at the same time a blindfold was applied to her eyes and all she could see was darkness.

“Right, haul them up. We’ll take them back and see who they are and who they’re spying for...”

“We’re not spying for anyone,” Adonia snapped from somewhere on Josie’s right.

Her brave words were followed by a squeak of pain,

“Personally I do not like being spoken to in that way,” a new, more pompous voice came.

“Merlin’s sake Macmillan...just gag them, it’s easier.”

“What would you know...” the pompous voice came again,

“That’s enough!” the first voice, sharper this time,

“It’s only because he’s a stupid Hufflepuff...”

“I said enough Corners; though you are right: gag them. We’re not death eaters and you would do well to remember it.”

Upon this command Josie felt a wad of material tied round her mouth. Now gagged, blindfolded and bounded Josie felt even more helpless

than she ever had when she had at Hogwarts. Maybe because she knew who the teachers were and what their favourite methods were; whereas now she had no idea whom these people were or what motives they had

“Come on.” The first voice again and Josie felt herself being pushed and shoved roughly through the trees and bushes, stumbling on the undergrowth and fallen logs as she tried to stay upright.

They hadn’t gone far when Josie was stopped by a rough yank on her bound hands from her captors.

Josie stumbled and fell landing awkwardly and heavily on her arm. She screamed as a shooting pain flew up her arm and into her head.

The man who had been holding her swore violently and pulled her up, though more gently this time.

“Broken arm,” he sounded apologetic for some reason.

The first voice, more exasperated this time, came,

“Take her to the hospital wing and take the other one to room thirteen. Keep her there until I come to interrogate her personally.”

This time Josie, still blindfolded, was lifted up into someone’s arms and taken downwards. Josie supposed a hill of some sorts. The ground levelled out and Josie’s ears were suddenly assaulted by the sound of hundreds of people talking. The voices stopped abruptly as she and her captors entered.

“Neville, what’s going on?” A female voice this time, cracked and horse though it had a warm quality to it.

“Found these two wandering the forest...”

“What did you do to her arm?” The woman’s voice had taken on a sharp edge to it.

“I didn’t do anything,” Neville replied, “she fell over herself...”

“Michael, take her to the hospital wing will you. I’ll be along shortly.” The woman’s voice was now brisk and business like.

“And the other one?” The guy, Michael, Josie presumed, who was holding her asked.

“I told you to lock her up in room thirteen...”

Josie heard a small whimper come from her left at this statement though Josie didn’t pay it much mind. The pain in her arm was so bad it took all of her will power not to burst into hysterical tears.

The woman took a deep breath before issuing the orders,

“Lock her up in room thirteen and after the other one has had her arm fixed lock her up separately. We’ll interrogate them separately and see what they have to say.”

Josie was carried one way while Adonia was dragged the other way; each screaming for the other.

Neville stood opposite the girl who claimed to be called Adonia in a small empty room. Adonia herself sat in the middle of the room on a lone chair, her hands tied behind her back with Neville standing in front of the blindfolded, sobbing girl.

The story he was getting from her didn’t seem...realistic? That herself and her friend Josie had started a rebellion at Hogwarts. Josie, being a half blood, had gotten in really bad with the teachers because of her bad mouth and after a particular incident (which Adonia had refused to go into) Josie had become reckless, been expelled and, this was where it got wired: in order to protect her from her step father they had gone up to the room of requirement, entered this room of hidden things and after Josie had picked up an ancient tiara (which Hermione was investigating now), Josie had wished for a place to escape to which would be safe. A portal appeared in the form of a

frame and they had stepped through...and that was where they were caught.

Josie had been interrogated in a separate room by Hermione half an hour ago and the stories were basically the same.

This would prove to Neville's mind that they were telling the truth if it weren't for several important facts:

One: The lookout, Michael Corner, hadn't seen any portal. All he said was that they 'just appeared out thin air'.

Two: no mention of a rebellion had been heard about. Of course a few whispers of reckless half-bloods came up now and again but nothing as major as the girls were talking about.

Neville sighed and picked out of his pocket a small vial with colourless liquid in it: Veritiserum.

This would determine if she was lying.

"Open your mouth," he snapped, trying his best to make his voice sound harsh but crumpling when he saw the girl's lips tremble threateningly before they parted; making an 'o' shape.

Neville had never been able to stay mad at people who cried, nor at people who showed him that they too felt pain.

Hand trembling he poured the small vial down her throat and watched as her trembling limbs ceased and she sat very still. If he could see her eyes under the blindfold he knew they would be unfocused and hazy.

Taking a deep breath and knowing that whatever came next would be the complete truth he asked his first question,

"What is your name?"

"Adonia Osborne."

“How old are you?”

“Fourteen. Fifteen in the summer holidays.”

“What is your blood status?”

“Pureblood.”

“If you’re a pureblood then why do you hang out with a half blood?”

“My parents only support the dark lord’s views to a point; they brought my brother and me up to be tolerant and kind to everyone, and to never discriminate as we are all human inside.”

“Then why do they support the dark lord?”

“To protect the family.”

“What house in Hogwarts are you in?”

“Both of us are Gryffindor.”

“And you say that you were head of an organisation called the angels which rebelled against the death eaters and the dark lord’s reign?”

“Yes. It was Josie’s idea and I supported her. Our aim is to learn the dark arts as well as defence in order to fight the death eaters. Using the dark arts against the death eaters was a good idea as the dark arts are adaptable and you can be more creative in their usage. The idea was to get professor Nott to teach us how to fight back using their own material and to get the older students to teach us what would be taught in the later years, thus making us one step ahead of the death eaters.”

“And the death eaters didn’t suddenly get suspicious of hordes of students suddenly becoming very good at Dark Arts?”

“We staged it so only the purebloods became so good so they would think that we were working hard so we would be able to join up at sixteen.”

Despite himself Neville was impressed by this cunningness and subtly

“Did they ever guess who was behind the rebellion?”

“They knew Josie was involved because of her outspokenness as well as her ability to make a mockery in all lessons. It only got worse when her mum married William White.”

Neville froze at this piece of information as past memories came floating to the forefront of his mind.

Hermione coming back from the pub and telling them all of that bastard William White, well known pro-blood purist and death eater, getting married and how he would get a half blood step daughter.

At the time everyone felt sympathy for the poor girl who was to be his step daughter; however as said step daughter was in the other room then maybe they could help her by giving her a place to stay here; though the pureblood, this girl, would have to be held as she might give them away.

Neville stared at the girl in front of him, a crease in his brow as he debated what to do next.

Two hours later, seated in the lounge area, Neville and Hermione were going over the problem of the two girls.

“If she really is the girl I heard Malfoy, Lestrange and White talking about...then it would be safer for her to stay here,” Hermione mused.

“What about her friend?” Neville asked.

Hermione sighed and picked up a leather bound album and put it on her knee. Neville came over and looked at the smiling photos of Harry, Ron and Hermione when they were eleven. Dotted here and about were pictures of James and Lilly Potter, the Weasleys, Hagrid, Dumbledore and the rest of the order including Lupin, Tonks, Mad eye Moody. Then a class photo including all but the Slytherins; and there, in the middle row at the side looking stunned but happy was a round faced slightly podgy boy with short brown hair and blue eyes looking happy to be included if not slightly stunned.

Neville sighed, remembering how much he had changed over the years since leaving school and feeling again the great wave of shame but unable to do anything about it.

“About the girl’s friend, Adonia...”

A picture of Harry and Ginny taken in the Burrow paddock, both holding their broomsticks

“I think it would be better for all if she stayed here...”

An old yellowing crispy newspaper clipping of the Weasleys in Egypt

“What if there is a search party?” Neville asked as Hermione turned the page and a large graduation picture of everyone, this time including the Slytherins, waving and smiling up at them. Malfoy at the side managing to smile but sneer at the same time: Some things never change, Neville mused.

“They’ll never find us Neville, not with the protective enchantments and wards round the place.”

A picture of the Hufflepuffs: Justin, Ernie, Hannah, Susan

“Those death eaters though...” Neville started as Hermione turned the page; only to be cut off by the fixed pictures of Hermione’s long dead parents.

A solitary tear slid down Hermione's cheek as she looked at her mum's smiling face.

Suddenly and without warning Hermione slammed the album closed, making Neville jump.

"If it makes you feel better Neville, we'll have the filius charm placed on Sanctuary with me as the secret keeper." Her voice was back to its usual business like tone.

Neville merely nodded and Hermione stood up, throwing the album back on the chair she had previously been sitting on with slightly more force than necessary.

"Allocate the girls the room next to mine and keep a strict watch on them for the next couple of weeks while I think what to do."

"Aye, aye, Captain." Neville tried to joke, though even to his ears it sounded feeble.

However Hermione smiled at the small glimpse of her old friend; happy to know he hadn't been totally destroyed by the war.

Watching as he walked out of the room Hermione reflected that if a small bit of Neville still remained then maybe there was hope for them all after all

Well what did you think: good? Bad? Terrible? Brilliant? Though if you do dislike it you can tell me so long as you tell me the reason why you dislike it. Constructive criticism people. I am all for it. I know this chapter wasn't as riveting as the last one, nor as long but the next chapter will be dedicated entirely to people outside Sanctuary: that means Mary, William, the triplets, James Law ECT. I might add a bit of Josie in it though now they are in Sanctuary I'm going to move the story on a bit by focusing outside Sanctuary.

Also if anyone wants to check to my profile you'll find some background material to this story there Anyway to those who guessed it was Neville: well done and high fives. I added Ernie into it as I love

the guy and wanted to add a bit of him in as his pomposness in the books make me laugh every time. Anyway, please review and hit the mark that I've set: that's twenty six people, twenty six reviews. Let's see if we can hit that mark by next Monday when I shall be updating again.

And to the people who guessed Neville: well done and high five to you.

Anyway, thanks again xxx

William sat at the head of the dinning table, glaring at his food as if the chicken was responsible for all his problems.

Mary sat opposite him in the vast dinning room, watching him fearfully while consuming her food to accommodate the triplets in her bulging stomach.

It had been seven months now since Josie disappeared from her room upstairs and ever since William had been in a permanent black mood. Mary had learnt early on in their marriage not to disturb him when he was in this mood; the scars on her back were a testimony to that.

Not that William had ever hurt her while Josie was in the house. Oh no, he always waited until she was at school and then he let his feelings on her marriage to James known. The only conclusion as to why he did this was the fact that he hated Josie more than he hated her, and watching Josie watch 'the happy family' from the outside gave him more satisfaction than punishing both at the same time: he was a sick sadistic bastard.

This last thought led onto her last letter to her daughter and she blinked back the tears furiously at the memory of William standing over her in one of his rages; his wand raised high threateningly as he dictated what she was to write. The coldness of the letter mixed in with her cowardice still sent shivers up her spine.

Her thoughts were interrupted by the house elf, Monty.

"Master, master Lestrange is here to see you. He's in the study master; Monty showed him there himself master."

Without a word William stood up, threw his napkin down on the table and with a kick at Monty walked from the room; without giving Mary even a look. Not that Mary cared. Silence was better than yelling any day.

"Is that all mistress?" Monty's voice again.

“Yes Monty; you can go back to your work now.”

With a crack Monty disappeared, probably back to the kitchen to finish preparing dessert. Mary sighed as she toyed with her food; reducing it to shapeless mush. Giving her appetite up as a bad job she looked around the room.

Decorated in dark emerald green with silver trimmings and deep mahogany furniture it showed her husbands personality to a tee. She sat back, with the makings of a bad mood coming upon her as she pondered what Lestrange wanted to talk to her husband about.

He was coming over a lot lately though Mary had no idea what they talked about; sometimes the minister accompanied him and, being the dutiful wife she was expected to be, played the perfect hostess though the men’s empty compliments and false gallantry made her want to retch. William never divulged their private conversations to her and she certainly didn’t have the guts to ask. This was just another stark contrast to her previous marriage to James and how they had told each other everything; how, when Josie had been born, they had vowed to stick together to protect their daughter’s welfare.

Then James had been taken and killed when Josie was two years old; the memory stood out harsh and vivid in her mind.

### Flashback

Mary had been in the yellow kitchen of their small house, preparing dinner with a two year old Josie playing with some coloured blocks on the floor. The kitchen had been brighter then; full of life and happiness despite the constant danger that loomed over them.

Mary was humming a tune as she stirred the pasta. James walked in and picked his baby daughter up, twirling her round and laughing as she laughed.

“I love you daddy.”

James placed a kiss on Josie's head. At six foot two James had dark brown hair, chocolate brown eyes and fine angular features. His laugh was deep, rich and infectious. He stopped dancing and held her daughter close with one arm; welcoming his wife with the other arm.

Hugs were constant in the family as James and Mary both found that inner strength could be found in the feeling of love that came with a hug; and strength was something both Mary and James needed at the present time.

Mary had previously spent a lot of her family's gold to change James's blood status from muggle born to half blood. Anything was possible in the wizarding world if you had enough money. It was this that perhaps had kept James safe for so long...though most of the death eaters knew that James was muggle born; having gone to school with them. Mary knew their luck could only go so far until they were forced into hiding, though she didn't like thinking like that.

Faking your family tree was a crime punishable by death and as James was a suspected activist in the current resistance: Dumbledore's Army, then that made the risk even higher.

"I've got to go out tonight on another mission with Neville..." James murmured into her hair.

"Why James?" Mary said quietly into his chest, "Why can't you stay home with us? Stay safe. If the death eaters see you laying low they might not see you as such a big threat...."

"I'm not a coward Mary. I wasn't placed in Gryffindor for no reason; I have courage and a desire to set Britain free from the place it's become..."

"A fools dream," Mary snapped, pulling away and taking Josie from him; placing her in the play pen which was next to the table.

Josie stood up, holding onto the side and watched her parents with the kind of bright eyed interest of a child.

“Mary...this will benefit us all. I don’t want my daughter to grow up thinking her father is a coward; who could have done something to make her world better but didn’t because he was scared of what it’s rather than the reality.”

Mary didn’t respond. The amount of the times her husband had gone on one of his harebrained missions. Granted, he always came back and laid low for a week or so but he always went back to fighting the death eaters. Mary’s main fear was that he would go out one night and never come back.

“Mary...”

“Dinner will be ready in a little bit.” The abrupt change of subject told James that his wife didn’t want to talk about the upcoming mission. In his own opinion, Mary was too cautious, very paranoid and obsessed with protecting and looking after the family. They saw eye to eye on a lot of issues but this wasn’t one of them. Mary saw the resistance as suicide; James saw it as the greater good that would benefit them all.

However James was convinced that when Voldemort was overthrown Mary would see he was right all along and, in his mind, shower him with kisses; call him her brave husband and they would finally be able to settle down and maybe have a few more children.

Until then though, he would have to carry on fighting, fighting and fighting some more.

James sighed and went over to Mary and gave her a kiss on the back of her neck,

“Save some for me.” Then he went over to his daughter as Mary swung round,

“You’re going now?” James didn’t reply just gave Josie a bog kiss on her cheek and told her how much he loved her and how this mission was for her, before placing her back in the play pen.

He turned towards the back door without looking at his wife; the reason being that he didn't want to see the worry etched into her face.

"James?" James stopped at the door, "Be careful." He turned around, covered the space between them into strides and gave his wife a long slow kiss before holding her tight as she did to him,

"I will. I promise soon everything will be okay, and we'll be able to relax." Mary gave her husband a light kiss before saying,

"I believe you. Now go and do whatever you have to do, you reckless Gryffindor." James smiled at his wife, happy that slowly she was accepting what he had to do in order to gain peace for everyone.

"I see you and Josie later." One final kiss and he was gone out of the door.

Dinner progressed as usual with Josie sitting on a chair, slurping down her pasta while chattering about nothing.

After the dishes had been cleared away Mary took Josie into the living room and played with her for an hour before announcing that it was bedtime.

Just as Josie was starting her usual long monologue about why she shouldn't have to go to bed the front door was thrown open and James, covered in blood and wild eyed burst into the lounge.

"Quick! Grab Josie now. We're leaving for..." Wherever they were leaving for was cut off by a loud bang as the front door was burst of his hinges.

James hesitated: a vital second which, looking back, could have been used to escape.

Black cloaked and masked figures entered the room; ten in all, circling them. James stood in front of his family and faced the tallest squarely on.

“Drop your wands now or we open fire!” Zambini’s voice floated from behind the mask.

Mary dropped her wand in front of her.

“Burns drop your wand or we’ll kill your half blood brat.” Malfoy’s voice this time; not as tall as his father but the sneering was reasonably the same.

James did as he was told.

A tall death eater picked the wands up and pointed his own wand at Mary who was holding Josie tightly,

“In the corner now,” the death eater growled. His voice sounded guttural and unrecognizable. Despite herself, Mary, after a despairing look at James, still frozen in the middle of the circle with a defiant look on his face, obeyed and stood watching horrified as two death eaters came forwards and started to beat up her husband the muggle way; throwing in various curses along the way.

Josie was screaming for her daddy with Mary sobbing hysterically. The death eater pointing the wand at them snapped,

“Shut the brat up or I’ll shut her up meself for a very long time.”

Swallowing back her sobs and pulling on every amount of strength she had, for Josie’s sake, she turned Josie’s face away from the scene and into her shoulder; murmuring meaningless words.

For Josie, she told herself, you have to be strong for Josie.

After five minutes of torture the death eaters stepped back and Zambini stepped forward,

“James Burns, you are under arrest by order of the ministry for withholding your true blood status as the filthy mudblood you are, as well as trespassing on ministry property. You don’t have to say anything,” two long cords flew out of Zambini’s wand and wrapped

themselves round James's still body, "but anything you do say will be recorded," a cruel edge came into his words," misquoted and used against you."

"Mary...Mary!" James's voice was stronger than was to be expected under the circumstances,

"Your wife and child will be left alone if you co-operate and accompany us to Azkaban where you will be subjected to the kiss before being thrown into a cell to rot until the end of your days. Which shouldn't be long, as mudbloods don't have a long life span in Azkaban" he added maliciously.

The mention of the kiss did it. Mary started screaming and tried to get out of the death eaters grip to get towards her husband; tears coursing down her cheeks; leaving burning wet trails.

Josie had dropped from her mother's arms and was now sitting on the ground, screaming for her daddy as he was dragged away by three death eaters.

"James! James, no, please! JAMES!!"

James looked back once, for a second, and gave her a smile,

"Look after Josie, Mary; For me." Then, unexpectedly, he twirled round, twisting out of the death eaters grip; and punched the death eater square in the face. Diving to the floor as five curses soured towards him he grabbed a brass ornament off a small table at the side and started swinging it wildly, hitting Zambini's square on making a sickening crack.

Blaise Zambini lay on the ground; his neck at a grotesque angle and James gave another wild swing at the closest death eater, dodging spells as the brass ornament came into contact with another death eater creating another sickening thud.

Mary grabbed Josie and pulled her into the far corner, holding her close as she cried; determined to protect her daughter with all of her being.

Mary sensed more than saw the flash of green light that erupted from a wand and the sound of one final body falling.

Silence followed. A horrible silence that told much more than words ever could.

Mary looked up, her face streaked with tears and saw two dead death eaters with her husband at the side; his once tall lean body now broken in death.

Josie was struggling against her mother's death grip but Mary wouldn't let go. Josie was all she had and if they were going to kill Josie then they would have to kill her too.

"Carry the dead back to the ministry. The men died for a good cause. Let their deaths serve as a reminder for what we are fighting for in eradicating the filthy blood off the earth." Mary didn't recognize the voice, though she didn't really care. Her body had gone into shcok as she tried to process her husbands death.

Josie had stopped struggling now and was holding onto her mother's blouse as if for dear life.

The death eater nearest her grabbed her hair and yanked it back, creating a burning sensation in her roots.

"Let her go Davis. She's nothing more than a filthy blood traitor. Her time will come when the dark lord demands it." Malfoy's sneering voice again and Mary felt her hair being realised and she bowed her head over her daughter in a protective gesture.

The sound of popping came immediately and Mary quickly looked up and gave a strangled scream.

They had taken James's body! They wouldn't even let her burry it. The cut that had been inflicted at his death intensified and Mary found the world spinning as her brain tried to protect her by going into deeper shock.

Standing up on wobbly legs Mary spotted her wand in the corner where it had been thrown and, picking it up, apparated to her ancestral home where she gave Josie to a house elf with orders to put her to bed in the nursery.

After that was done Mary stumbled into the library; a vast room with hundred of books in thirty foot high bookcases, a few tables and comfy chairs dotted about with a warm blazing fireplace and warm lit lanterns giving the room a warm glow. A balcony ran round the room with more books and a swirly staircase descending down onto the ground floor.

Stumbling towards the fireplace Mary collapsed in a blue armchair as the past events finally caught up with her and she cried hysterically. Cried like never before as she mourned her husband.

After two hours of solid crying Mary was emotionally as well as physically drained. So she just sat in the chair, staring into the mesmerising flickering flames while contemplating suicide.

Then just as she was about to cast the killing curse on herself an image of James came into her mind and she knew how disgusted he would be at her cowardice. His last words came back to her,

“Look after Josie, Mary; for me.”

Lowering the wand Mary cried herself to sleep, silently vowing that this would be the last time she would ever cry like this and no matter the cost; Josie would never grow up to be her father; hunted like an animal for her recklessness.

Mary jerked from memory lane, her cheeks wet with tears as she heard the study door close and men's voices in the hallway coming this way.

Quickly wiping her face and adopting a cool distant facial expression Mary stood up as the men entered; slipping easily into the fake perfect hostess façade she had constructed to protect herself from her husband.

Offering her hand to Rodolphus she forced a smile at him as the required pleasantries were offered.

“I was just saying to William that we should really have you over sometime for dinner. We have never repaid you for that lovely meal you gave a month ago.”

“Really Mr Lestrange, it is alright...”

“No no I insist. Without the mongrel hanging round your neck I’m sure you and William would enjoy a night out...”

“Once the triplets have been born, then yes; I’m sure Bellatrix will arrange something,” William cut in with a crafty look at Rodolphus.

Rodolphus returned the look which didn’t go unnoticed by Mary and she suppressed a shiver.

“Mary, you look tired my pet; why don’t you go upstairs to bed. Mr Lestrange and I have some business to conclude. We can do it over desert.” The snub couldn’t have been more obvious though she obeyed meekly, hating herself as an image of James popped into her mind.

Bidding goodnight to the men she ascended the main grand staircase and along the first flood landing to her room which she shared with William. Though now she was pregnant he was starting to spend more time away from home.

Not that she was complaining as all he seemed to do was be snide to her these days; but she wondered what the future held for her after the triplets had been born. She wasn’t naive enough to believe that William really cared about her: she knew he was using her to get heirs to carry on the lines; that he despised her as much as she

despised him. The charming man she had known during their short courtship had been replaced as soon as the wedding band was on her finger, by a cruel heartless man who delighted in the pain of others.

This wasn't the man that she wanted raising her triplets. Josie had gotten away and hopefully was safe, so for the moment all she had to worry about was the triplet's birth and what would happen after they were born

A great load of water filled her shoes and soaked her dress as soon as she finished that thought and her first thought was: crap. Her second thought was: it's too early. Her third and final thought before panic set in was: William has to know.

Stumbling from the room she screamed for Monty who appeared immediately.

"Go get William. Tell him the triplets are on their way." Monty, tennis ball eyes wide, nodded quickly before disappearing.

Mary took the time to lean against the wall, taking deep breaths and trying not to panic. Now was not the time to worry or panic, she told herself, she could think of what to do after the babies had been born.

Following her instincts she stumbled back into her bedroom and quickly changed from her ruined evening dress into her nightdress and climbed into bed just as William sped into the room, closely followed by Rodolphus who William had chosen along with Lucius and Narcissa and Bellatrix to be the children's godparents.

"The healer is coming." His tone was kind and Mary felt a scream rip through her throat as she felt the first contraction.

He was being kind now; why couldn't the bastard have been kind all throughout the bleeding pregnancy she thought viciously as the flames in the fireplace turned green and a tall blond healer stepped through at the same time as another contraction came.

Ushering the men out the healer turned towards Mary and helped her fully into bed,

“Now you just relax, dearie. Nature usually does most of the work for you...all you need to do is help it by giving a little push.” Another scream; this one more out of frustration at the woman rather than because the pain was bad.

“ That’s right, dearie. Another push...my, my, this is a fast birth...another push please.”

Within twenty minutes Mary had had enough of the ‘dearies’ and the sickly voice telling her to push. Couldn’t the woman see she was pushing?

Hair stuck to her forehead from sweat, in more pain than the Cruciatuus and just thinking how good it would feel to strangle William for putting her through this...how had she forgotten childbirth was so painful? She finally snapped when the healer said for the umpteenth time,

“Keep pushing. There’s a good girl. Keep pushing.”

Now Mary wasn’t the type of woman to swear regularly; majority of the time she frowned on it as she saw people who did swear with having a very limited vocabulary. Also as William’s wife she had to put up a cool sophisticated front...and cool sophisticated people didn’t swear: Unless of course they had been carrying triplets for the past seven months, worrying over their firstborn daughter, and with a moody verbally abusive husband in the house to deal with.

If that wasn’t enough, now said husband wasn’t in the birthing room when all she wanted to do was throttle him for putting her through this pain; not to mention all she had to sooth her was a patronising woman whose vocabulary consisted of ‘just push dearie. Just push’ since she had entered the room.

It was enough to make any cool sophisticated person swear. And swear she did,

"I am fucking pushing!" Her blue flood was shortly followed by another bout of colourful, carefully chosen words

If the woman found her remarks offensive she hid it with the fake big patronising smile that most midwives use when their charges use interesting combination of words.

"That's nice dearie. Now, one more push. I can see the head."

"Stop calling me dearie you...!" The healer's only indication she was paying any notice was her raised eyebrows as she heard words she had no idea existed.

"Alright dearie. Just push."

William was standing outside the bedroom with Rodolphus, his lips pursed as he heard his wife's vulgarities.

"To be fair Will, she is pushing something the size of a watermelon out of something the size of a lemon."

"So long as she doesn't make a habit of it; I have no desire to see my children grow up into foul mouthed little mudblood loving..." he stopped, unable to find a word bad enough to describe what he thought of people like that.

Rodolphus gave his friend a sly look,

"Has the dark lord spoken to you yet?"

"About the plan? Yes he has."

"Then she won't be...around to influence the children."

William closed his eyes as another bout of swearing burst forth from behind the closed door.

His lips turned upwards into a smile though at the thought,

“No, she won’t, will she?”

Hermione stared at the diadem in front of her in shock, a large leather bound book on the table next to her with a picture of a tall regal lady wearing a tiara.

“Ravenclaws Diadem,” she muttered to herself. This was impossible. How could the girl have got it? It defied belief that Voldemort would have just randomly left it around....but then Tom Riddle might have been arrogant enough to believe only he could get into the room of requirement thus making it a good hiding place. Also from what she remembered Harry telling her, was that Hogwarts had been a true place of belonging for Tom Riddle; so it made sense really, she mused.

From talking and getting to know Josie Hermione had gathered that Josie had no idea what she had grabbed in that room. All Josie had said was that she had felt a wired sort of attraction to it so had taken it.

But this was the next step that could finish Voldemort once and for all. One of his final links to immortality destroyed.

The first five was gone: the ring, the snake, the diary, the cup and the locket...and now the diadem would make six.

Hermione knew what the seventh was but could see no way of getting close enough to destroy it: Lord Voldemort’s wand of all things. Made after killing Harry Potter to make up for Nigine that Harry had managed to kill before the final killing curse hit him straight in the chest, ending his suffering and sending him to his parents.

Sighing and feeling a large headache coming on Hermione closed the book and brought out the photo album that she had thrown to the side when looking through it with Neville all that time ago.

Turning to the back she stared for a long time at the smiling happy picture of her in St Mungo's looking tired but happy; with Ron next to her looking like he had won a gazillion galleons.

And there...there in her arms was her son, her baby son with the trademark red hair; the son who she had been separated from when he was a year old when the death eaters broke into their first headquarters at the Burrow: killing all the Weasleys, Mad Eye (though, she remembered, Mad Eye had taken three death eaters with him), Hagrid, Lupin and Tonks. It was her son that kept her fighting; his cries in the background spurring her on... then she had gotten captured and sent to Azkaban. And as for her son, well no body knew what had happened to him. Her baby boy who would be fourteen now if he had lived...Hugo Ronald Weasley.

HAHAHA! Another cliffy. But yeh again I'd just like to thank LupinTonksLove again for the superb idea about the son (the details will be revealed shortly) which gives me a fab excuse for Hermione to get the final Horcrux as well as make the ending happier. As for the words during the birth, well use your imagination.

Please review guys. I'm not gonna bother making a limit this time. But I am begging you to feed my addiction. Addictions aren't good but review addictions are an exception.

Anyway thanks for reading. The constructive criticism still applies. I want to know ways in which to improve my story. Thanks again xxxx

“…then James threw a stunner at the death eater chasing us, which hit him square in the chest, and we managed to get out of the ministry and apparate back to headquarters.”

Josie stared at Neville with rapt attention as he told another story regarding her father and his heroics. Her mother had rarely talked about her dad; mostly talking about him in warning against her following in his footsteps. It had been depressing to say the least; but now hearing these stories from a man who had fought beside her father; who knew him, was so uplifting she couldn’t help but give what the Americans call a ‘million dollar smile.’

As for Neville himself, he had fast become fond of the girl; seeing James shine out of her constantly. He was more than happy to tell her stories of her dad, though he was beginning to worry; whenever he finished the tales of narrow escape he saw a light in Josie’s eyes. A light not unlike the one currently residing in Ernie’s eyes whenever he talked about the newly reformed DA and the upcoming mission tonight....a mission Josie was going on, he had heard.

“Josie...” he shook his head, struggling for words, “the way we escaped...James and me....it was all pot luck. We could have been killed on numerous occasions....”

“But you weren’t...”

“Your father was killed in the end though.”

He hadn’t meant it to come out so brutally; but he needed to get across to the girl that war was no game. There were losses; a lot of them personal in one way or the other. That war brought people together: made the side you were fighting for more like family; so when one was taken it affected everyone...an image of Luna talking about Wrackspurts popped into his mind, and he felt the tears forming behind his eyes.

Josie herself had looked away and was focusing on the far wall,

“But from what you told me he fought to the end...”

“I don’t know the detail’s Josie...”

“My dad gave his life for a cause he believed in. For freedom, democracy, equality among all; no oppression....I’ve lived with oppression my whole life because my only crime is being a half blood...” Josie paused as an image of her mum came to mind. The wound was still raw, “But I’m gonna fight; just like dad. I started it in Hogwarts and I’m going to carry on fighting until we win...or I die.”

Neville looked at her, his blue eyes unusually sharp,

“ You fool,” he whispered, “At your age you think you’re invincible...that you can overcome anything. Nothing can overcome the death eaters...nothing. Your father though they could but in the end he died; just like everyone else: Harry, Ron, Luna, The Weasleys, Mad Eye, Tonks, Lupin...the list goes on.” His voice suddenly rose an octave, “DON’T YOU UNDERSTAND: THEY WILL KILL YOU WITHOUT REGRET, WITHOUT THOUGHT. THEY DON’T CARE!”

“I care though,” Josie whispered, “and my dad cared. I have nothing to lose, and if I do die then at least I’ll see my dad again,” she looked up and Hazel eyes met Blue ones, “you may be cowardly enough not to fight Neville; but I’m not.”

“Then you’re a fool,” was Neville’s only reply.

Josie just shrugged, rose and walked towards the door. However she stopped in the doorway and said in a quiet voice,

“Better to be a fool who fights, than a fool who does nothing.” And she was gone, out of the door in a second.

Neville’s first instinct had been to go after her, to agree with her. But he fought that urge down. Hadn’t he lost enough? Hadn’t they all lost enough? The talk of the DA reforming was insane, suicidal even. Another image of Luna popped into his mind, urging him on but he blocked it.

It didn't do to dwell on dreams, he reasoned, much better to stay safe underground...however Josie's last words came back to him and the feeling of unease deepened. The image of Luna popped back into his mind with a look of disgust at his cowardice on her face and this time Neville found he couldn't shake the image off.

Josie and Adonia stood next to Ernie and Terry; as Hermione stood in front of them in the communal living room, going over the last details of the raid.

"Terry, Adonia; you two go round the back of the building and create a diversion. Nothing major; I don't want any casualties; maybe set fire to part of the building or something. Keep yourself hidden! No heroics! Then Josie and I, under the cover of Polyjuice, will enter the ministry and hopefully there won't be many workers there as they'll all be at the distraction caused by you two," an indication of the head to Terry and Adonia,

"What about me?" Ernie asked,

"We'll be using you as an excuse to enter the ministry. Lestrange and Carrow should be at the school teaching but if we were to bring in the long wanted Blood traitor Ernie Macmillan then no one will ask too many questions...especially if we say we found you wandering the grounds and the headmaster was out. Lestrange is the deputy so there should be no reason why they should question Bellatrix's authority..."

"They'll question Carrow's though..." Josie put in helpfully, still not happy with her part in the whole plan.

"Not if Bellatrix wants her there," Hermione said dismissively, "now, drink up," she added handing Josie a beaker filled up with a grey glop. "This will give us approximately two hours. Two hours to distract, get in; grab the two muggleborns waiting for transportation and leave. Josie, I'm giving you a direct order here: if I fall back don't come back for me. Carry on. Understand?"

Josie nodded, the enormity of what she was about to do catching up with her. Feeling something more was needed though, Josie squared her shoulders; took a deep breath and said in a clear voice,

“I understand.”

Hermione nodded.

“Hairs in place.” Josie picked out of her pocket a scraggly blond hair, wrapped in clean film.

How Hermione had obtained these two hairs Josie had no idea, and furthermore didn’t like to ask. Hermione hadn’t been in the best mood lately.

Josie dropped the hair into the beaker and after some sizzling the mixture turned a sick yellow colour. Just looking at it made Josie want to retch.

Taking a deep breath Josie downed it in one before choking,

“Ew, that was disgusting. Worse than...than...eww,” she said again and started to cough.

However as she bent over she stared at her hands which had begun to transform into small podgy ones. Slowly she felt her whole body being transformed; shrinking into a small stocky woman. Her face felt wrong as well; lopsided in a way.

Her next words confirmed the transformation was successful by how her voice sounded,

“That was truly disgusting.” Of course the others heard Josie through the wheezy high voice of Alecto Carrow, though for Josie: hearing the voice of her ex muggles studies teacher made her jump.

“Of course it was disgusting. Alecto Carrow is a truly disgusting person. The Polyjuice tastes like the person. If the person is good then the taste will be syrupy and sweet. If the person is evil then she

or he will taste worst that gurdyroots." Josie looked up and where Hermione had been standing was the tall imposing figure of Bellatrix Lestrange.

"Are you sure you'll be able to pull it off Hermione...I mean we were taught by her..."

Hermione smiled at Adonia. She had quickly come to realise that the girl's hundreds of worries stemmed from her caring and loyal attitude towards her friends.

"Bellatrix and I have had...run ins in the past...I know how exactly she acts."

'Fifth year, department of mysteries: Luna, Ron, Neville, Ginny, Harry and herself surrounded by ten death eaters.

Bellatrix Lestrange and Lucius Malfoy, the main two in the circle.

"Neville Longbottom? How's mum and dad?" Her voice laced with insanity.

Hermione's first thought had been: BITCH!

"Better, actually, now they're gonna be revenged..." Neville lunged at the psycho bitch in front of them as Bellatrix struck; her Cruciatus hitting a nearby prophecy as Malfoy deflected it and started yelling at her not to use magic. Neville had been held back by Luna and Ron.

The fact that Neville was showing some spirit and tremendous amount of bravery swelled Hermione heart...

"Why does Voldemort want it then..."

"You dare say his name? YOU FILTHY, LITTLE HALFBLOOD!" Her voice had gradually rose until it reverberated round the hall of Prophecy; sounding more insane than ever.'

‘A year after they had left school, Ron Hermione and Harry on the mission to hunt and destroy the Horecruxs. They were in the riddle house; blood pouring from his scar Harry still summoned up enough hate to point his holly wand at the snake, and yell.

“AVADA KEDAVRA!”

The green flash of light came and the snake did an interesting flip in the air, landing still on the floor; her eyes open, unseeing and glassy in death.

“Master! Master they killed Nagini! MASTER!” Her hair sticking out at odd angles, her eyes aflame with insanity Bellatrix ran in her wand raised high as she threw curse after curse at the trio, while screaming for Voldemort, who dodged, reflected and shielded against them.

What happened after had been Harry death...’

Hermione broke from her thoughts. She didn’t want to dwell on that. It was still to painful to think about.

“Come along then.”

Three pops later, and the room was empty of inhabitants

No one noticed the slightly open door and the haunted blue eyes that watched from the crack. If they had they might have noticed something different about those eyes. The defeat that had resided there for thirteen years was slowly fading, to be replaced with a certain deadly determined sparkle; a sparkle that all but one of the occupants of Sanctuary had thought long dead.

After the initial uncomfortable ride, sidelong as usual, Josie fell to the ground in a back ally.

The air around them stank of death, illness and suffering. Screams and cries could be heard from all over and the sun was setting, making the sky look like it was bleeding.

Josie shivered.

“Where are we?”

“Outside the ministry. London. Adonia, Terry, get to your positions and stay safe. Remember, the distraction is the signal.” Both nodded and slunk doff into the shadows.

Josie picked herself up, not used to the small squat body of Carrow.

“Ernie, are you ready?”

“Ready as ever.” Hermione produced some rope and tied his hands loosely in front of him under his cloak; his wand still in his hand so at a moments notice he could yank his hands free and engage in combat.

Screaming from the massive building which was the new ministry of magic came and after a few beats Hermione nodded.

“Come on. Josie you get behind Ernie and keep your wand pointed to his back. Don’t speak unless spoken to. Leave the talking up to me.” Josie just nodded; the feeling of sickness rising in her throat as she fought to keep it down.

Hermione walked towards the high glass doors of the new building for the ministry, which had been moved above ground when Voldemort had taken over Britain; removing the Secrecy of State, Ernie following meekly behind her with his head bowed, with Josie jabbing her wand into his back for effect.

Ernie pulled a face, but bore it.

“Madam Lestrange?” The look on the security guards face was one of fear and doubt, “What are you doing here? I was under the impression form the headmaster that you were to stay at Hogwarts...”

“I see no reason why I should have to explain myself to you,” Hermione said in a very accurate impression of Bellatrix’s most condescending voice, “I wish to go down to the cells...”

“The cells...but Madam Lestrange...”

Hermione wipped out her wand and pointed it straight into the guards face,

“Maybe I should look into your family tree Perkins...would you like that?” Hermione was now using Bellatrix’s most playful, calm before the storm voice.

Josie knew what Alecto would do here and let out a...giggle. A wheezy giggle that rattled her lungs.

“Perkins a half-blood? Perkins a mudblood? Let’s have a look.” Josie hated using the word but to play the part convincingly she needed to act as Alecto would act.

“Of course Alecto, why would the guard look so scared if he had nothing to hide?” Hermione had placed a cruel edge into her voice.

“No...no please madam...madam Lestrange...I’ll take you to the cells...”

“Now...”

“Yes ma’am, now. Let me grab my keys an we’ll be off.”

As the man was clumsily getting his keys Josie looked around. A massive black statue with a wizard and witch was in the middle of the hall with magic is might engraved on the front. Like Hermione had predicted: it was empty of inhabitants.

“Let’s go, shall we?” Perkin’s nervous voice came and Hermione nodded,

“Quickly though. Alecto and myself need to get back to Hogwarts before those brats make any other trouble. I’ll leave a note for Rodolphus regarding the intruder.”

Perkins eyes slid curiously to Ernie but he didn’t say anything. Not if he wanted to keep his job and remain safe.

“Move you,” Alecto Carrow’s voice flew along the dark corridor and it took all of Josie’s willpower not to wince at the sound.

Ernie winced though, thinking how accurate both girls were; but did she really have to jab the wand into his back so hard?

Perkins led them to an elevator at the bottom of the corridor and, once the golden doors had closed, went down, down, down into the depths of the ministry.

Perkins was shifting uncomfortably and it made Josie wonder if he really did have something to hide.

Finally the lift stopped and Perkins led them out into a darker dingier dungeon corridor which, Josie supposed, was underground.

Never having been to the ministry before she didn’t know its layout though she had been assured the others did.

After numerous twists and turns Josie was beginning to lose track of time. It was only when Hermione’s voice rang out, loud and shrill,

“William, how nice to see you,” that she was jerked out of her thoughts on how Adonia was doing and her head snapped up to see the smiling cold face of William White, her step father.

Mwahaha! Sorry I just had to leave it here, it was too good to resist. I’m on a role now and will probably update a lot faster as the story is moving on fast...faster than I had hoped. Anyway, please review. I have twenty seven reviews so I’m setting another goal: thirty. Not hard, but if you want to go over thirty I have no problems with that. The constructive critics still applies. Thanks again. Xxxxx

“Bellatrix, Alecto; so nice to see you,” William said in his most gallant voice; “I thought you were at Hogwarts?”

“We apprehended an intruder,” Hermione motioned vaguely towards Ernie, “So we brought him here. Alecto and I were going to take him to the cells then leave a note for the minister as I’m not entirely comfortable with staying away from the school so long.”

“Indeed? Well, ladies, allow me to escort you...”

“That won’t be necessary, William, I am perfectly capable of getting there myself...” Hermione cut in only to be cut over again by William,

“But I’m going down there myself to see to some mudbloods. Get them into service early, you understand?” He took a firm grip on Bellatrix’s arm, “Rodolphus would never forgive me if I allowed his wife and a member of his staff to go unescorted down these dreary corridors.”

Hermione narrowed her eyes at him but finally nodded. William let go of her arm and turned a charming smile to Josie,

“So Alecto; how is Amycus doing? I haven’t seen him in a while?” he asked as they began walking further down the dungeon.

Josie strove to keep her voice calm and not let the tremors inside her take over,

“Aymcus is fine William. He is lookin forward to the next meeting to give an update to the Dark Lord...” Josie said vaguely, not sure what she was talking about

“As are we all, though I did notice he didn’t have a lot to report on at the last meeting...well I’m sure he’s fully recovered from our Lord’s punishment as well as learnt his lesson regarding his duties at the school.”

Josie raised her eyebrow. She had no idea there was such competition between the death eaters or purebloods. Though, she reasoned, the Whites had a longer pureblood history than the Carrow's; so it would stand to reason that there would be some power play in regard to blood and status with the dark lord.

Josie realised William was still waiting for an answer,

"Amycus realises his mistake which is why he wants to make up for it at the next meeting." Josie was sure Alecto would have gotten defensive on behalf of her brother. Her point was proved correct at William's cruel smile and next words,

"We shall see."

They had reached a door now and William retrieved from his pocket some keys,

"Have I given you my congratulations on the triplets William?" Bellatrix asked.

Hermione's constant source of information on the outside world never ceased to amaze Josie.

"Why thank you Bellatrix. Yes it is desirable to have three children to carry on the line. It is just a pity my father couldn't be here to see it..."

"Indeed. And your wife..."

"The plan the Dark Lord has for her death is fast approaching. He has talked to you about it, I presume?"

Hermione held back a gasp and nodded.

"The Dark Lord tells me everything, I am his most loyal" Hermione said in an uncanny imitation of Bellatrix's most adoring voice.

William just settled for a cringing fake smile,

“Indeed.” He turned to Perkins, “You may leave now. Madam Lestrange and Madam Carrow are with me.”

“Yes sir.” Perkins hurried off.

The door opened and Josie got a glimpse of inside: a long corridor bordered by rooms with bars reaching from the ceiling to the floor ran the length of the corridor.

Most of the cells they passed were empty until they reached a small dingy cell with the walls covered in green slime. There was no furniture in the room aside from a bundle of filthy rags in the corner. The stench coming from the rags was incredible.

It was only on further inspection that Josie realised that the bundle of rags were, in fact, two children huddled together.

William yanked them apart and Josie got a good look at them. Small and skinny they couldn’t have been more than five and six years old: One boy and one girl. Both filthy with long lank dark hair they stared up at William with uncontrollable fear.

William slapped the girl across the face so hard the crack resounded in the small room and she fell to the floor from the impact.

Incredibly, she didn’t cry though. Perhaps, Josie thought, like herself she had learnt not to cry and just accept the treatment given to her. The sight of a child acting like this was disgusting.

“You will never look at your betters like that again, you filthy mudblood. Understand me?”

“Y...Yes sir,” came the mumbled reply.

Josie had had enough. The fear she had originally felt at seeing William was now replaced by a deep disgust and hatred like nothing she had ever felt.

“Crucio!” William let go of the kids and flew through the air; writhing and screaming before banging his head on the wall and lay on the floor; out cold.

“Josie!” Hermione was looking at her with a furious expression on her face.

“Sorry,” Josie mumbled; not at all sorry for her actions. If anyone deserved the Cruciatus curse it was William.

Hermione’s and Ernie’s stern faces cracked and a small smile graced their lips before Hermione shook her head and muttered to herself,

“Like James.”

Turning to the two children she said in a softer voice which was at complete odds with Bellatrix’s demeanour.

“I need you to come with me, Ernie and Josie here. We’re going to take you somewhere safe.”

A loud bang from above them came, making all five of them jump.

“Quickly,” Josie added.

The muggleborns looked at each other then Hermione. The mistrust and fear etched in their faces was heart breaking.

“Your taking us to him, aren’t you?”

“No we’re not. Please, you have to trust us. Where you’re going is safe...”

“Please...don’t take us to him. I’ll do anything,” the girl sobbed.

Josie took over.

“We won’t” she snapped impatiently, “But we need to get out now if you don’t want to be caught.”

Both children looked at her before taking Hermione’s hand and following Josie out.

“Oi you!”

All of them twirled round and Hermione recognised Yaxley, the bastard, coming towards them from the far door at the end of the corridor.

“Josie, take the kids and leave. Ernie and me’ll deal with him.” Josie looked ready to protest but one look at Hermione’s face told her otherwise.

Grabbing the kids’ hands she ran down the length of the corridor; feeling her short stubby legs change back to her own ones as she heard rather than saw Ernie and Hermione engage in a duel with Yaxley.

Ignoring the kids gasps at her now back to normal appearance, Josie reached the elevator and pushed the button half a dozen times until the door opened and she shoved the ground floor button.

“Going up, ground floor.”

The doors closed on the loud bangs that were coming and Josie let go of one of the kids’ hands and grabbed her wand out of her pocket where she had shoved it when grabbing the kid’s hands.

Forcing herself to remain calm and not think about the danger Ernie and Hermione were in she ordered the girl to hold hands with the boy as the door opened and Josie saw Perkins sitting behind the desk.

“Oi! What do you...?”

“Stupefy.” Perkins dropped like a sack of potatoes.

“Reducto,” Josie pointed her wand at the wall which had now been blasted away; leaving a mountain of rubble and dust.

Still holding the kids in one hand and her wand in the other Josie ran out of the building, adrenaline pumping through her system.

Yells and screams were coming somewhere from her left so she veered to the right; the dust blinding and choking her though she didn’t slow down.

Her senses had been heightened and felt so much sharper due to the adrenaline.

“Josie! OI, JOSIE!”

Josie’s head snapped round and she spotted Adonia and Terry hiding behind a mound of rubble that had once been St Paul’s Cathedral.

Running towards them Josie hid next to Adonia whose face was smeared with grime.

“Where are Hermione and Ernie?” Terry asked immediately.

“We got found by a death eater and they took him on. Hermione told me to go and run...so I did.” Josie felt like a coward, as her Gryffindor tendency came to the surface. It didn’t matter that Hermione had told her to run; she shouldn’t have left them to fight the death eater on their own.

“We’ll give them ten more minutes then we’ll leave...” Terry said and crouched further down in the rubble; the others following suit.

After the ten minutes were almost up Terry shouted suddenly,

“Over here!”

Two familiar faces, caked in dust and grime, appeared. Quickly grabbing onto Ernie with the muggleborns holding onto Hermione,

who like Josie, had turned back into herself; they apparated back to Sanctuary.

A couple of hours after the raiding party had come back Neville went in search of Josie to have a very strong word with her about the Cruciatus Curse that she had used on William. Reaching her door he stopped a she heard her voice inside, talking to someone.

Peeking through the crack in the door he saw Josie sitting on her bed, alone in her room, and looking at a photo while talking to it.

“I did it Dad. Hannah Abbot says I’m now a fully fledged member of the DA. Hermione told me that I’ll be carrying on with my education so I’m not easily beaten by the death eaters. Though what I did learn today was that you have to be quick and not give the enemy a second or they’ll take advantage of you. I thought we’d lost Hermione and Ernie today though luckily we didn’t...I hope your proud of me for what I’m doing; fighting I mean. Mum isn’t. She hates me now, she told me in a letter while I was still at school. William came and gave it to me. Neville said she never liked you fighting and I supposed she didn’t like me fighting...though I don’t understand why she hates me...was she always like that dad? Did she hate me when you were alive?” Josie asked, not expecting an answer, and not getting one from the waving smiling picture.

Neville closed his eyes as he heard this. Whenever he had spoken to Josie he had got the feeling that Josie didn’t like speaking about her mother; but if she had to, she had never sounded as heartbroken as she did now.

He realised she had started talking again,

“I know Neville means well about not fighting cos from what people have said he lost a lot when he did fight...but so did I! I lost you and mum and my friends are still at Hogwarts and I don’t know what’s happened to them. I mean, okay so the mission went well but I’m scared dad. I’ve always been scared but now I’m even more scared...not for me, but for my friends at Hogwarts; Jamie, Trev and Ellen as well as the rest of the Angels...I’m not putting it above the

death eaters to try and get at me by taking my friends hostage or something." Her voice took on a very fierce quality, "But if they are then I'll go save them dad. I would never let them down...and you know, if no one sees your fear; just the iron determination then they won't fear either. Well, they might but if they think you know what you're doing then they'll follow you to the end. Only I am scared dad. I really am. Though I suppose having courage doesn't mean you don't have any fear; courage is just the emotion to get through fear. I suppose that it's okay to be afraid, so long as you have people to help you through it..."

Neville had heard enough. Slipping away from the door he made his way to his own room and sat on his bed.

What Josie had said was true enough, but what really made him think was the last thing she said: that it was okay to be sacred. That you didn't need to be strong all the time; that you weren't alone if you had friends.

Looking at the framed picture next to his bed of Luna and himself, he realised that the people you love never leave you. That the love never left you and that love...love conquered all. He snorted to himself at the old cliché.

Ernie entered the room.

"Hello, Neville. Did you hear about Josie and White?"

"I heard."

"If anyone deserves it that bastard did..."

"Ernie, what keeps you fighting?" Neville asked out of the blue. Ernie seemed surprised.

"I suppose it is a mixture of things," Ernie admitted, "The memory of my parents, of Susan...not wanting to let them down in a very strange way..."

“Do you ever feel scared out of your wits?”

“Merlin yes...”

“But you don’t let it stop you,” Neville whispered.

“I say Neville, what is all this about? You are speaking in riddles.”

Neville smiled at his slightly pompous best friend.

“Doesn’t matter Ern. Forget it.”

Ernie gave his friend an odd look before nodding and laying on his own bed and pulling out a defence book Hermione had leant him and began to read, soon forgetting about Neville’s out of character behaviour .

Neville however couldn’t forget. And it was the thought of Luna and what Josie said that kept him up all night.

Thanks guys; I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: reviews are always welcome. The more the merrier I always say. Love it? Hate it? Characters aren’t in cannon? Unrealistic? Tell me and I’ll go back, improve and ensure the future chapters are better. After all, I can’t see the story from my readers’ point of vies so I’m relying on you to tell me, no pressure. Anyway, thanks again xxxx

The small boy sat on a bench, chained to the wall in a cell somewhere deep in the ministry of magic. Water dripped onto the floor of the cell, creating a small puddle of water.

The boy himself was intriguing if not a bit strange. Shoulder length bright red hair clashed with his large chocolate brown eyes. His face was peppered lightly with red freckles with a frame which was tall and lanky for his age; and his lips were chapped and his eyes dull from fourteen years of being under fed and neglected in the half blood orphanage he was forced to call home.

Well, up until a few months ago when he had been taken out of Hogwarts, prison that it was, and escorted to the ministry where he was then subjected to forty eight hours of grilling over the whereabouts of Hermione Granger. What he had to do with Granger was a mystery to him; and the ministry hadn't answered any of his pleas or questions about the link they felt he had with her. Gradually getting more and more frustrated at his lack of knowledge they finally had him thrown into a cell in the depths of the ministry; seeing no one aside from the mudblood that brought him scraps of food and water every few days.

If it hadn't been for her and the news she sometimes brought about her masters then the boy would have thought that the ministry had forgotten about him.

What struck him as odd though was why? Why had they picked him out? He had always kept his head down at school, refusing to join in the rising rebellion his fellow housemates had participated in; he had taken the treatment the death eaters dished out to him without question; his grades were reasonably high; and the orphanage hadn't complained, had they? He did his chores when there, he ate what he was given; took what punishments Malfoy and Parkinson gave when they felt like it without complaint...again, why had they picked him?

It wasn't as if he was anything special, he mused, not like Josie Burns; a fellow year and housemate who had disappeared eight months ago after creating a storm in the school before being expelled. If she had been taken by the ministry the boy would have understood...but she hadn't. It had been him and now here he was,

stuck in a dungeon somewhere in the depths of London with only his thoughts and the rats to keep him company.

But then there was no point in wondering why, was there, he thought practically. They had done and now all he had to do was wait and see what they were going to do with him...though after all these months he was beginning to think he'd stay here forever.

Laying his head against the stone wall he closed his eyes as he let his thoughts wander: fantasizing like he had done as a child about his parents and how they would burst into the cell and rescue him and then they would go into hiding, somewhere where the death eaters would never find them, and live happily ever after. He looked over the fact that his parents were dead, seeing no reason to depress himself further.

It was only the clink of a key in the lock and the sound of a door swinging open that broke through the boy's fantasy of his father stunning ten death eaters at once, and made him look up; expecting to see Verity, the mudblood who brought him food.

The figure standing in the doorway wasn't Verity though; tall, thin, death eater robes which fitted perfectly with the surroundings and a wand pointed right at the boy's chest.

Despite the threat of death the boy felt hope bloom in his chest. Was he finally getting out of here?

The death eater looked at him before turning his attention behind him. A bang from the wand and a small scream of pain followed before the death eaters snarled,

“Get in there you filthy little mudblood and get him down from those chains.”

Verity ran in holding a large iron key. At fifteen she looked more like ten with the customary grey robes all mudbloods wore swamping her rail thin body; her long brown hair was dull and lifeless which was mirrored in her dull green eyes.

Hurrying over to the chains Verity unlocked them with shaking hands and the boy felt the blood rush through his half numbed hands.

Rubbing them the help the blood rush through faster he failed to notice the death eater walk further into the cell until another cry from Verity came and the boy looked up and saw her half running, half walking out of the cell and up the corridor; Probably to continue with her never ending duties.

“Get up,” the death eater snarled; his face hidden behind his mask.

Slowly and wearily the boy got up and, his legs feeling very stiff walked towards the death eater who muttered an incarnation and ropes flew out of his wand and wrapped themselves round the boy. Predictably, the boy lost his balance and fell to the floor with a loud crushing sound. Pain flew up into his head as he felt blood ooze from his now broken nose down his filthy robes.

Levitating the boy up the death eater led him, still floating a foot in the air, out of the cell; following close behind.

Dark dots dancing behind his eyes the boy hardly took notice of his surroundings as the death eater took him through a thick oak door and up some steps till they reached a landing with an elevator at the end. Pushing the button a few times forcefully, the doors opened and the death eater and the boy went in.

“Ground floor, going up.”

After a few minutes of silence the door opened and the boy was led into a hustling atrium of the ministry of magic.

“Travers!” The death eater stopped and turned round to face Yaxley.

“What?”

“You are taking the boy now?”

“What do you think?”

“The Dark Lord didn’t want to see him until tonight...”

“I got different orders Yaxley. Are you questioning the Dark Lord?”  
Travers finished, shocked.

Yaxley quickly recovered,

“Of course not. I am his most...”

“Don’t do a Bellatrix, Yaxley, it does not suit you. We all know how much the Dark Lord trusts you; there is no need to say it.” Both men smirked at the joke most of the male death eaters shared, Rodolphus included, regarding Bellatrix. Of course due to Bellatrix’s insanity none of them had the nerve to say it out loud, again, Rodolphus included.

“I’ll see you at tonight’s meeting then,” Yaxley finished.

Travers gave a curt nod before grabbing the boy’s arm and dissapperated directly into Malfoy Manor.

Though before they left the boy was certain he felt a brush of a hand on his leg though looking down there was nothing there.

It was only when they reappeared in the magnificent hallway of Malfoy Manor that the boy’s heart dropped to his feet as he realised his time was almost up.

Ignoring the mudblood who came up to him, meekly asking to take his cloak Travers levitated the boy through a large oak door and down some slimy stone stairs until they reached a door at the bottom.

Opening the door the boy was thrown mercilessly onto the floor. Another incarnation and the ropes fell away, leaving the boy to curl up in a protective ball.

“I’ll be back later to take you to the Dark Lord. You may have kept information from the ministry but no one can keep information from the Dark Lord,” Travers announced in a condescending voice.

“Information?” the boy asked through dry cracked lips.

Travers let out a harsh humourless bark of laughter,

“Well, aren’t we the good little actor. A few minutes under the Cruciatus will sort that out. But if you really want it spelt out for you then yes: information. Information on the whereabouts of your mother: the mudblood Hermione Granger.”

And the door was slammed, leaving behind a very confused boy in the pitch black darkness.

At that exact moment Hermione was reading a report from Ernie and Terry who has been doing surveillance at the ministry under a very strong disillusioning charm.

Said report was by far the most interesting so far. Apparently just as they had been leaving the ministry Terry had seen a boy being levitated out of the lift and, stopping Ernie, both had crept closer to the death eater who had the boy levitated and bound at wand point, and had over heard a conversation between, to quote, ‘that bastard Yaxley...found out the death eater was Travers; some political warfare going on between the death eaters,’ as Ernie so nicely phrased it.

The Dark Lord wanted to speak to the boy? Why? What could the boy possibly know that Voldemort would find valuable?

Hermione scanned the re-accounted conversation again but couldn’t find anything more and the questions just kept coming.

Hermione heard rather than saw Josie come in and drop into an armchair.

“I hate Potions,” was the first thing she said in the most miserable tone Hermione had ever heard.

Hermione looked up and tried, and failed, to hold back a laugh at Josie’s appearance: covered from head to toe in bright pink gunk she looked like a walking, talking candy floss.

“It’s not funny!” Josie cried, “I’ve always been bad at Potions. It’s Adonia’s subject...”

“And what does Hannah say about it?”

“She says I’m never going to be a potions master.” Hermione smiled. That sounded like Hannah: kind and diplomatic to the end. Just like all Hufflepuffs: kind, loyal, hardworking and most importantly, diplomatic.

Hermione looked at Josie out of the corner of her eye; an idea forming,

“Josie, do you want to come with me on a mission tonight?” Immediately, the girl’s face brightened up.

“Yeah!”

Just like her dad, Hermione thought.

“Can Adonia come? We always work together...”

Hermione wasn’t sure. Josie was very good at Defence, making leaps and bounds in the subject, as well as a wide range of Dark curses she had learnt at Hogwarts and at the TA meetings. Therefore she was perfect for tonight’s mission.

Adonia however was better at Potions, showing great promise in the subject, and though Adonia was brave she wasn’t as good in defence and Hermione didn’t want to put her life on the line un-necessarily.

She had learnt that lesson with Harry when they had gone to kill the snake at Riddle Manor. Harry didn't have to have come but he had insisted, refusing to back down until Hermione relented, thinking the more there was of them the better. She had learnt how untrue that was when Harry had died, as she found out it just gave you more people to worry about.

“Please Hermione; we've come this far together...”

Hermione sighed. Feeling that she was somehow going to regret this decision she nodded,

“On look out only. Now, go wash that...potion...off yourself first, get changed; then bring Adonia in here and I'll debrief you both on tonight's mission,” the business like tone was back and Josie nodded quickly before leaving the room. It was always easier making a to do list as it kept you busy and so your mind was less likely to wander...wandering into painful memories.

Shaking her head she realised Josie had already gone.

Hermione laid her head back and stared up at the ceiling. Why had she picked Josie? The girl was only fourteen and there were far more experienced people here in Sanctuary that could easily take her place...an image of James popped into the front of her mind.

James and Hermione had been good friends during school.

James had been in the year below her and Hermione had tutored him potions, as like Josie he had been abysmal.

As soon as he had left school James had joined up with the Order of the Phoenix and Hermione and himself had gone on many missions together; working well as they both were good duellers and James always had an incredible amount of luck wherever he went and in whatever he did.

Maybe it was also the fact that they were both muggleborns and therefore at a much higher risk of dying early that helped the bond of friendship grow.

Ron had understood of the prejudices against her during their school years but he could never experience it personally. James had and it was that as well as his thirst for learning new defensive spells that created a bond between them.

To say Hermione had been surprised when James had married Mary O'Rylie, a Ravenclaw in the same year as him, had been an understatement.

Hermione had never taken to Mary: seeing the woman as too cautious, too safe...she never liked risks and she preferred to keep her head down rather than fight; so what attracted her to James was a mystery, though as James was happy Hermione had been happy.

Maybe it was how alike James and Josie were that made Hermione take Josie on missions...how her enthusiasm for fighting back helped spur Hermione on when she remembered, herself, how much she had lost. The girl needed to start somewhere and the more people they had active the better.

Neville didn't agree though. He insisted the girl was too young; should finish her education before even thinking of fighting; that she couldn't even apperate yet...that's he was a liability on missions. However as Neville wasn't active and had never been on a mission with her he hadn't realised how wrong he was. Josie was anything but a liability. Quick with her wand work and on her toes she was a good person to have by your side

However, Josie had not yet lost someone in a mission and Hermione prayed that it wouldn't come anytime soon. Of course she had lost her friend at Hogwarts, and her mother; though from what she could tell both were still alive. It was when they were killed right in front of you which caused the problems.

Half an hour later found Hermione, Adonia and Josie going over the final plans one last time before both girls took a mask from Hermione and Adonia was given a silky cloak made from water like fabric.

“This was Harry Potters...it’s an invisibility cloak. Wear it and you won’t be seen. It will keep you safe.”

Not giving Adonia a chance to say anything as the memories were rising, Hermione held out her arm and, mutely, both girls took it as again the threat of death loomed over them.

The appearances shifted from Sanctuary to a small country lane. The sun was setting and Josie looked to her side, only to find Adonia gone.

“I’m here Jose,” came a soft whisper and Josie nearly jumped out of her skin as Adonia appeared from nowhere, taking off the cloak.

“Get back under the cloak...” Hermione hissed; then, on a stroke of inspiration Hermione hissed again, “Make room; we’re all coming under.”

This was easier said than done though Hermione was still rail thin and Josie didn’t take up much room. Somehow, they all managed to get under the cloak and, stumbling, walked forward towards the looming forbidding black blob that was Malfoy Manor.

Hermione took out her wand and after waving it for five minutes Josie felt the air around them shiver and...fade?

“Come on,” Hermione hissed, “I don’t know how long we’ve got until they realise the wards have failed but I’m not giving them long. Now hurry!”

Pushing open the gates they hurried along a great gravel driveway and round the back to the front door.

Opening it silently, still under the cover of the cloak, they slipped inside just as the house's mudblood came out of the kitchen, her head bowed as she carried a tray towards the dining room.

However, noticing the half open door she stopped and frowned. Before she could do anything however, a slightly open door at the side where voices were coming from opened, and Draco Malfoy walked out. Fifteen years of death eater activity showed in his receding hairline with some grey hairs making their way into the platinum blond. His grey eyes were harder than Hermione had ever seen them as he gazed at the grey robed girl carrying the tray.

“Did you leave the door open you filthy useless mudblood?”

“N...no m...master.”

A loud slap was her only answer.

“And I suppose it wasn't you who made the wards fall around the place with your tainted blood,” he sneered.

The girl fell back slightly, recognising the signs of an upcoming beating: probably in front of the master's friends.

From under the cloak, about a foot away from the drama, Hermione watched feeling sorry for the girl but relief that they hadn't been found out. She pushed the guilt aside; plenty of time later the feel guilty.

Waiting until Draco had escorted the girl into the dinning room, slamming the door behind him, Hermione and the others hurried across the marble floor towards the far door: Josie and Adonia following Hermione's lead as somehow she seemed to know where they were going .

“Alhomora!”

The lock clicked and, pushing open the door they hurried into the dimly lit depressing stairway; closing the door quietly behind them.

Hermione threw the cloak off them and ran down the stairs, the girl following silently behind her until they reached the door.

“What if he’s not there?” Adonia asked helpfully

“Then we’ve failed,” Hermione answered because she simply refused to drag Josie and Adonia, young as they were, into a room filled with death eaters. They weren’t ready for that yet.

“Alhomora!”

Another lock clicked open and Hermione was suddenly filled with an irrational fear at what lay beyond the door. Pushing it away she opened the door to see a small low ceiling stone room with one occupant lying, battered and bloody on the floor.

“Hugo!” Hermione’s heart stopped for a full minute when she heard what Josie said. It couldn’t be, could it? The boy opened his eyes and Hermione was met with a mirror image of her own eyes.

“Josie...is that really you?”

Josie and Adonia had hurried into the cell and were now lifting him up, his shoulders under their armpits as he seemed incapable to stand by himself

“It’s not you. It’s just you stupid death eaters making me see things I want...”

“Will you keep your voice down and shut up,” Josie snarled quietly, “It’s us with Hermione Granger; come to rescue you...”

“No it’s not...” his voice was gradually getting louder and Hermione cast a silent ‘Silencio’ on him though Hugo continued to mouth words uselessly.

“Come on, get him under the cloak.” Hermione marvelled at how she could keep her voice calm under the circumstances. Aside from

the brown eyes the boy looked exactly like Ron right down to the number of freckles on his face.

Pulling her eyes away from him she concentrated on getting all of them under the cloak though after a few attempts it was evident that they weren't all going to get under.

Voices from behind the door caught their attention,

“What’s the door doing unlocked?” a brutal voice came

“No idea. It was probably that filthy mudblood up there. You know how they are around the house...” a raspy voice this time.

“Better in bed though,” the first voice came and both men laughed, making Hermione feel highly sick and absolutely furious at the word’s implications.

The door opened and three stunning spells hit the two death eaters square on, giving them no chance.

Slumping to the floor Hermione found herself breathing heavily in anger, and forced herself to calm down. She needed a clear head if they were going to get out of this alive.

Josie, you and...Hugo get under the cloak. Adonia and I will back you up.” If she had been thinking clearly at all she would have placed Adonia under the cloak as Josie was better at defending herself; though she was still reeling from the shock of finding her long lost son.

Stepping over the death eaters, Hermione in the lead with Josie and Hugo under the cloak behind her and Adonia at the back, the group climbed the stairs and Hermione glanced round; happy to find the entrance hall empty....though clearly a meeting was taking place from behind the closed door as voices flowed out talking about Hogwarts.

“Hurry,” Hermione hissed and she silently crossed the hallway to the front door, the other three following her.

However, just as the trio of teenagers were halfway across the hallway a door opened and the mudblood they had seen previously came out of what looked like a kitchen.

She stopped in shock at seeing Adonia and Hermione standing there with the cellar door wide open.

Instinctively Hermione cast a Silencing charm on the girl though this didn't stop her from dropping the bucket she was carrying onto the cold marble floor creating a loud CLUNK!

The voices from the meeting room fell silent and Adonia, Josie and Hugo ran towards Hermione; who had her wand raised threateningly at the girl who was standing there, with terror written across her face.

"Hettie, what is..." another, larger woman came up behind the girl and she stopped when she saw the intruders. Before Hermione could cast any charm the woman screamed, "INTRUDERS! GRANGER AND A GIRL!" The voice seemed to echo everywhere and after a few seconds silence from the meeting room the door was thrown open and half a dozen death eaters ran out; casting spells wildly.

Hermione immediately took on four herself while Adonia was locked in combat with her ex Ancient Runes teacher Selwyn and another masked death eaters.

Making her decision Josie pulled her wand from her pocket and poking it out of the cloak started sending stunners at the oncoming tidal wave of death eaters that poured from the room.

About ten went down before someone noticed the hand suspended in midair and sent a random stunner that way. It missed Josie but hit Hugo who slumped to the floor, taking the cloak with him.

Swearing Josie sent a stunner at the death eater who fell to the ground where the mask slipped off revealing Amycus Carrow.

No-one else had noticed Josie yet and, knowing they needed to leave now, noticed a large fireplace at the side with a flowerpot filled with floo powder. Inspiration hitting her Josie grabbed Hermione and

Adonia and dragged them towards the fireplace, still firing every spell that came to mind into the remaining death eaters who hadn't gone down, before remembering Hugo who was still lying under the cloak.

"Floo powder. Say O'Rylie Manor then apperate back to Sanctuary from there."

Casting a shield charm that extended across the hall preventing the death eaters from getting near them, Hermione grabbed Adonia and made for the fireplace with the death eaters and, Josie saw with alarm, Voldemort, firing spells at the shield; cracking it.

Finding Hugo, and dragging himself and her across to the fire she reached it just as the shield broke and voice which Josie recognised anywhere as White's yelled,

"You filthy mongrel! AVADA KEDAVRA!"

"Expelleramus!"

Josie watched in slow motion as the spell came towards her, ignoring the second shout which had come from behind her. Time seemed to slow down and it seemed to take forever for the spell to hit. Just before it came in contact with Josie someone threw themselves in front of her screaming, "No!" as the killing curse made contact and Adonia Osborne did a few flips in the air before she lay on the ground in front of Josie; staring unseeing with glassy eyes up at the ceiling; her skin pale in death.

Time stopped still, or so it seemed to Josie. What happened next Josie couldn't remember; just that emotion took over her mind as tears streamed down her cheeks as she fired curse after curse at the death eaters with emotion, the unspeakable grief in her broken heart giving her the advantage and the death eaters took a step back.

Someone grabbed her arm and dragged her into the fireplace, another voice which seemed to Josie's hazy mind as slow and guttural yelled.

"O'Rylie Manor!" Flames effulged her and Josie found herself being held on tightly to by two sets of arms and she fell onto a hard marble floor.

The grief was overwhelming; nothing like she had felt before and her legs gave way as the image of Adonia taking the curse for Jose and how she had died replayed over and over in her mind.

"Come on Josie." Someone was lifting her up, though Josie didn't care anymore weather it was a death eater or friend. Her best friend was dead, gone, and nothing could fill the gaping black hole in her heart caused by the death.

The feeling of being shoved headfirst down a narrow pipe came and Josie found herself lying on the floor of the lounge area of Sanctuary, crying her eyes out as her heart was further torn in pieces as the image of Adonia staring up at the ceiling, at Josie, unseeing was tattooed on her memory.

Turning to Hugo Hermione told him to stay where he was, that he was safe now, before levitating Josie up and out of the room and into the hospital wing where Hannah came rushing out at the noise, gasping when she saw the state Josie was in.

Josie didn't feel the small bottle being shoved into her mouth, nor did she taste the potion than ran down her throat. All she did feel was the black blessed oblivion that began to take over her mind and she was asleep, postponing the moment when she would have to face the fact of Adonia's death in the clear light of death.

"What happened? Why was screamin Adonia's name?" Hannah demanded of Hermione.

"Adonia is dead," Hemrione said, blinking back her own tears. Then lifting her chin and ignoring Hannah's gasp of horror she said, "There is a boy in the lounge area. Rescued tonight. Will you look after him while I do something?"

Hannah nodded and Hermione left; walking towards her room. Hannah noticed as the door swung shut behind her, that Hermione was holding two wands: her own and what looked like a yew wand.

Okay, I realise you hate me for this but believe me I'm mourning her death too, having created her and now having to kill her off. It's not easy you know!

Besides, I'd always known since the beginning that Adonia would die and she died for her best friend which is true friendship people. However, I realise this may not satisfy you so I'm going to give you a glimpse of the ending: William's time is slowly ticking away and his death will be poetic justice. Not saying any more! And besides I did warn you above that there was going to be a death.

Anyway even if you guys all review telling me how much you hate me for this at least I'll get more reviews which is my main aim.

So again, please review even if to tell me how much you hate me. We'll set the target at thirty four reviews and if we go over that: all the more better.

Thanks xxx

When Josie would look back on the two months after Adonia's death all she would remember is a big blur. This, she supposed, was down to shock and emotion overload.

What actually happened was for the first two weeks Josie lay in the hospital wing, staring at the ceiling when she was awake, talking to nobody and eating nothing until Hannah threatened to force feed her; the rest of the time was spent taking various potions for shock, nutrition to make up for what she couldn't eat, and most of all dreamless sleep.

When she did sleep without the potion she always had the same dream: It started off by the memory of Adonia taking the killing curse and lying on the floor, staring into Josie's eyes; then the corpse said, "It's your fault. You went back for Hugo." And Josie would argue back that it was Adonia who jumped in front of her to take the curse and the corpse would say, "But if you hadn't gone back I wouldn't have to have taken it." Then the corpse would turn into William who would be standing opposite her in a long room, laughing and mocking Adonia's death. It was then that Josie would wake up, screaming and crying until Hannah ran in from her office and held Josie until she calmed down.

By the end of the second week the shock subsided and the unbelievable pain set in as Josie was forced to face a bleak future without her best friend.

What made it worse was that Josie was constantly plagued with flashbacks right from when they had first met on the Hogwarts Express when they were both eleven; going to Hogwarts for the first time right up to the final mission. Had Josie ever told Adonia how much her friendship meant to her? That Adonia had been like a sister to Josie? How Adonia had always been her calm, quiet but no less solid rock that kept Josie sane in the current regime; had Josie ever told her? Josie couldn't remember and to an extent Josie didn't care.

She felt like she was falling into a deep black bottomless abyss and the only person who could have pulled her out was dead. Dead, Josie thought, what a final brutal word. Gone, now that was preferable as

Gone could mean many things while dead only had one real meaning and Josie wasn't prepared to fully accept the fact yet.

After she left the hospital wing Josie spent most of her time in her room, refusing to communicate with others and only sometimes coming out for meals. Most people in Sanctuary tried talking to her, though mostly they just received a blank stare of stony silence depending on what they said.

Hermione herself was racked with guilt at what had happened though as she had been through the grief process so many times before she could deal with it more easily than Josie could; though the guilt kept eating away at her until, two months after it happened, she began to justify it; as people do when the guilt gets to much.

“We’ve all been through it Neville,” she said to her old friend who had been oddly quiet since Adonia’s death, “Josie had to learn that death is a part of war; that there are losses on both sides...It’s better that she learns it sooner rather than later as...”

Neville looked up with an unusually hard expression on his face,

“She is a child Hermione; she shouldn’t have to deal with it.”

Hermione’s response was to bow her head and look away. After a few moments Neville spoke again,

“Why did you take them Hermione? They’re only fourteen...”

“It was a mistake,” Hermione shot back, tears in her eyes.

“At least before we had an age limit of when you could join up; seventeen: an adult. This was exactly the reason why we didn’t let anyone under seventeen join up....”

“Have you spoken to her Nev?” Hermione changed the subject, the guilt tearing her up.

Neville sighed,

“A little bit. She doesn’t like talking about it though...she hasn’t come out of her room since leaving the hospital wing.”

“She should, it’ll make her a strong person if she does and more able to deal with the next mission she goes on...”

“What?” Neville was enraged, his face twisted in fury, “After what happened you are going to allow her to continue?”

“If she wants to and I have a feeling she will, though we have to help her through the grief...”

“Hermione...” Neville’s voice had an animal-like anger to it.

Hermione locked her eyes with Neville,

“You say she is a child; who shouldn’t have to deal with this, but what you are failing to realise was that her childhood was taken away the moment her father died and her mother left her to fend for herself before being shipped off to Hogwarts; less said about that place the better...”

“I know but...”

Hermione stood up and started pacing the room, suddenly very restless.

“I agree with you that Adonia was probably the closest thing to family she had, just like Sirius was the closest thing to family Harry had and Harry was only slightly older than Josie when Sirius died...he got through it, didn’t he?”

Neville looked at Hermione and saw, in her eyes, a hint of desperation before realising that she, deep down, like everyone else, was scared for Josie’s sanity. That after everything Josie had been through ranging from her dad to William; this latest incident might be enough to throw her off the edge.

“I’ll talk to her,” Neville promised. Hermione sank back down into her chair, a look of utter relief on her face,

“Thank you Nev.”

Then the repressed tears came and Neville held Hermione close until the slowly subsided and even then they just held each other, comforted by the closeness of two good friends.

Finally Neville pulled back and asked,

“Hannah said when you left the infirmary you had two wands? Was it Adonia’s, because if so...”

“Adonia’s wand was left with her body back at Malfoy Manor...there wasn’t time.”

Leaving the girl’s body behind triggered another major guilt trip.

“Then who’s...”

“Voldemort.”

Neville was so shocked he was stunned into a full blown silence; just staring at Hermione; waiting for the explanation.

Hermione sighed; deciding that even if Neville wasn’t active in the rebellion she could tell him, no, she needed to tell him...him and someone else so if she did die then there would be others...others who knew the secret...who knew how to finish him off.

“Well it started in sixth year; Harry had these private lessons with Dumbledore...” Hermione looked up at Neville who nodded his consent for her to continue, “Well, you remember the hall of prophecy in fifth year? Well apparently a prophecy had been made...about a boy who was born at the end of July and who had the power to kill the dark lord and how the dark lord would mark him as his equal. Well Harry was the chosen candidate as the prophecy didn’t name him; Voldemort chose him...”

“Chose? You mean there was more than one?”

“When is your birthday Nev?” Neville’s eyes bulged out of his sockets at the implications, Hermione carried on,

“Anyway, Dumbledore didn’t have a lot of time in our sixth year left so he needed to give Harry vital information about Voldemort that would finish him off...Using a Pensieve and guesswork from Dumbledore, which was uncannily accurate, we learnt about Voldemort’s past; how he was, is, the last living descendent of Salazar Slytherin on the Gaunt side and how his father was a muggle...Tom Riddle.”

“Voldemort is a half blood?” Neville blurted, this being the last thing he expected.

Hermione nodded gravely, before continuing,

“We learnt that his dad abandoned him before he was born and his mum died giving birth...he was left in an orphanage where he apparently developed his hatred of muggles and through that, muggleborns. He learnt of his ancestry and learnt that his dad abandoned him...well he killed his dad at sixteen and created his first Horcrux...”

“Horcrux?”

Hermione sighed, feeling the usual disgust whenever she had to talk about the art of soul splitting,

“He wanted to remain immortal, fearing death, so he split his soul in two; encasing it in the Peverell ring...”

Neville’s face betrayed his deep disgust and feeling of nausea that was beginning to take over.

“Anyway to cut a long story short, there were seven horcruxes in total. The ring, which Dumbledore destroyed, the snake, which Harry killed, the diary which Harry destroyed in second year...”

“The chamber of secrets,” Neville jumped in, placing the pieces together. Hermione nodded.

“Hufflepuffs cup, destroyed by me just when we’d left school; Slytherins locket, destroyed by Ron shortly before I destroyed Hufflepuffs cup...”

“It was that easy”? Neville asked stupidly. Hermione closed her eyes, blocking memories of Inferi, black lakes, a distorted image of Tom Riddle himself coming out of the locket....

“No Neville,” Hermione said in a very small whisper; so quiet Neville almost missed her words, “It was anything but easy. If you remember, Harry died after killing the snake and Ron and I barely got out with our lives.”

Neville remembered and he fell silent until...

“But...you said there were seven...” he said, counting them off on his fingers, “That was only five...” he stopped at Hermione’s face, “The wand?”

“Yes. While Josie was firing spells at the oncoming death eaters Voldemort came into the fray, his attention fixed on Josie. When he lifted his wand, probably to strike her down, a few things happened that diverted his attention therefore giving me a chance to disarm him and get out...”

“What?”

“White cast the killing curse first, intended for Josie, and as you know Adonia took it. The fact that White probably disobeyed orders and tried to strike her down when it was clear his master wanted to do it, annoyed him and his attention was shifted to White but then Adonia broke free and jumped in front of Josie; again diverting his

attention and giving me an opportunity to disarm him. Bad mistake on his part.”

Neville couldn’t help it: he gave a small smile at Hermione’s cleverness. The last spell Voldemort would expect was a disarming spell...Neville shook his head,

“Some poor sod’s going to get it.”

“Probably White,” Hermione mused,

“Serves the bugger right,” Neville growled, before shifting his attention back to the subject at hand,

“But that only makes six...”

“Josie brought the seventh horcrux with her from the room of requirement: Ravenclaw’s diadem. I destroyed it immediately when I realised what it was.”

“So the wand’s destroyed as well?”

“No...” Neville’s eyes bulged out again, resembling tennis balls

“Where...”

“It’s safe. I thought you might like to destroy it, seeing as how much pain the snake has caused you?”

Neville looked at Hermione fully in the face for a whole minute before giving a tiny nod.

Without a word Hermione got up and went over to the wall where, after tapping her wand on a certain spot, part of the wall disappeared to reveal a small hole about a foot up and across. It was quite deep though and in it was what looked like a long thin wand box.

Taking out the box Hermione brought it over to Neville,

“The wand is in there. All you need to do is snap it but, just to be safe...” she got up, went over to the wall and brought out a Basilisk fang.

“Wh...eh...How...”

“I brought it back from 12 Grimmauld Palace a week ago; Harry, Ron and I went down to the chamber and uprooted all the fangs from the Basilisk down there and brought them back to HQ, hiding them, so we could use them to destroy the Horcruxes.” Hermione handed Neville a fang.

Placing the fang to the side and picking up the yew wand from inside it's case Neville looked at it and his thoughts went into overdrive....flashbacks, names of people, memories (some good, some bad)...the wand felt wrong in his hand, like his dad's wand had felt wrong until he had broken it and gotten a new one...it was like a bit of Voldemort...

**SNAP! For Harry**

Hannah running towards him a year after they had left school, “Neville! Neville, Hermione and Ron have just got back...they say Harry's dead, Neville, he's dead!”

**Stab! For Ron and the Weasleys**, The fang came down with all the energy and emotion from the past fifteen years behind it.

Hermione, shaking Ron in the midst of the battle, “RON! RON, WAKE UP! TALK TO ME! Please Merlin, no. Please! RON!!”

**STAB! For Hermione's imprisonment**. The two pieces of the wand were now splintered though not completely firewood

‘The daily Prophet is pleased to announce to the public that they can sleep safer in their beds, now that the mudblood Hermione Granger has been imprisoned for three life sentences.’

STAB! For all the innocents that had been killed by this wand, direct or indirectly by its master's orders.

Harry. The Weasleys. Mad Eye. Lupin. Sirius. Tonks. Kingsley. Lilly Potter. James Potter. Dumbledore. Adonia.

The wand was now completely destroyed, reduced to small tooth picks. Throughout the pulverising of the Horcrux the wand had let out a long high scream until it completely died; leaving behind some inky coloured black goo.

But killing the Horcrux wasn't enough. Now Neville had allowed his demons to rein free throughout his mind he felt the need to destroy things; to make things pay like he had had to pay.

Smash!

The sofas were overturned as an image of himself on one knee proposing to Luna popped into his mind

Bang!

The rug was torn up as he heard her, clear as crystal in his mind, say yes.

Crash!

His fist breaking as it hit the wall as he saw them planning the wedding, Luna talking about how she wanted a Christmas Wedding; however they couldn't have mistletoe as Nargels lived there.

Neville didn't stop.

CRASH!

Neville reading in the paper, that stupid paper, that Luna had been killed. That was how he had found out. "The blood traitor Lovegood has been identified as being one of the dead.'

The collage on the wall of the people who had died or gone 'missing' came fluttering down as Neville started ripping them off, though his energy was leaving him now; the anger being replaced by tears; uncontrollable tears that fell down his face like hot little rivers.

Falling to his knees Neville cried as the pictures came fluttering down like rain until one photo landed on his knee. It was of himself, Luna, Hermione, Ron and James Burns.

Feeling someone behind him, holding him close he cried uncontrollably as Luna waved up to him from below.

How long he cried he didn't know only that when he finally stopped and looked up it was to see Hermione, tears in her own eyes.

"I'm sorry Neville," she whispered.

Neville managed a watery smile. It wasn't her fault. None of it was. Standing up on shaky legs Neville looked round. Now his eyes weren't blinded by the red haze he was shocked to see the damage he had done. Pulling out his wand he was about to repair everything when he heard Hermione's voice from the ground.

"Neville, I'll do it. Can you just go and talk to Josie when you're ready...make sure she doesn't do anything stupid."

Neville lowered his wand and looked at her before nodding, and walking towards the door he paused at the frame. Without turning his head he said in a low voice,

"It's me who should be apologizing, Hermione."

The he was gone, leaving Hermione in a pile of debris wondering what he meant.

Neville stared at the closed door in front of him and sighed. No sound was coming from inside and usually Neville would have thought this meant no one was home. However, when it came to Josie, lately, all you got was silence.

Knocking on the door he opened it without waiting for an answer.

The first thing he saw was Josie, lying on the bed looking half starved; staring at the ceiling. That wasn't what shocked him. What shocked him was the look on her face. The look was of someone who had given up on life as there wasn't anything to live for.

"Josie?"

Silence. Neville wondered if she actually could hear him, having created barriers round her head to keep out anyone who tried to get close.

Neville thought about leaving but then slapped himself. The girl needed support; she needed to cry on someone. Most of all, she needed a friend.

Sitting on the bed he started to talk. Why he felt he had to tell her this was beyond him but he did. Even if the girl didn't respond he could at least say he tried.

"When I was one, my parents were tortured to insanity by the Lestranges. That was just after Voldemort had gone missing. I was brought up by my Gran, and though I loved her, still do, and she loved me; she scared me. I can't emphasise how much Gran scared me. I started Hogwarts at eleven and I wasn't popular, hardly had any friends...Gran always used to compare me to my dad, wondering why I was put in Gryffindor as I seemed to have no courage and very little magical ability...but the sorting hat said to me, when I put it on that there were different types of courage, that I had a deep inner courage. It took that to stand up to Harry Ron and Hermione in first year, to stand out and be me in my own right. I learnt that over the next seven years. After I left school my parents died; they were in St Mungo's permanent spell damage ward for sixteen years; gradually getting worse and worse...a year after they died Gran died, though just like Gran she took two death eaters with her. She didn't let my parents...condition, stop her from fighting and she fought to the end."

Neville stopped and glanced at Josie. Although she hadn't moved, he felt sure she was listening as her eyes seemed more alert.

"After Gran came Harry, dying in an attempt to set the world free for oppression. A year after that there was a massive fight at the Burrow where all of the Weasleys...well, all but one...died. The Weasley twins, now there were two funny guys. Even in the depths of death and war they could still bring a smile to your face. The Hermione was imprisoned...we carried on fighting though, two years later Luna, my Luna, was killed on a raid in the ministry. We were going to get married after the war..."

"What are you trying to say?" Josie's voice, cracked and hoarse from lack of use, still sounded very aggressive.

"What I'm trying to say is that you shouldn't bottle your grief up. Channel it into doing something constructive..."

"Like giving up and being a coward?" The words were said with a fair amount of vindictiveness and anger that Neville had never heard from Josie before.

"Adonia's dead, Josie, but she died for you. Do you honestly think that she would want you to lie here, wasting away?"

Josie jumped up; her pale face now maroon,

"How dare you? What would you know?"

"I've been there Josie; I know what it's like..."

"No you don't!" Josie screamed "At least your Grandmother loved you...my mother didn't even do that. Then I got a step dad who was as bad as V...Voldemort himself. And then your mother writes you a letter, A LETTER, Telling you how much she can't stand you, how she's rejecting you because of her 'shameful marriage' and through that her shameful daughter." The tears started falling as she stared into Neville's calm face, as all the anger and hurt at the injustices in her life came pouring out in an angry tirade, "MY MOTHER HATES

ME, MY DAD LEFT ME AND MY STEP DAD TRIED TO KILL ME! AND THROUGH ALL THAT...ALL THROUGH THAT ADONIA WAS THERE, MY BEST FRIEND AND SISTER ALMOST! AND NOW SHE'S LEFT ME...WILL YOU STOP LOOKING SO CALM!"

Neville didn't stop looking calm, only raising an eyebrow therefore infuriating Josie more.

"She didn't leave you Josie; she loved you as much as you loved her. Enough to die for you..."

"Well she shouldn't have!" Josie spat, "I'm a filthy disgusting mongrel half-blood! There, I've said it; won't William be proud?" The sarcasm in her voice would have made anyone but Neville cringe.

"Your not filthy and disgusting, nor are you a mongrel. And being a half blood is no shame; your father was a muggle born...he didn't think you were disgusting and neither did Adonia. Blood isn't important...that's why people are fighting. To get how unimportant blood is across...."

"There's no point. All that happens is pain, pain, pain. Never ending pain..."

"You know that though. You've lived through the oppression and you knew what you were signing up for..."

"I thought I did..."

"What did you think Josie? That somehow none of us would die? Even though I have told you time and time again about the people who did die before? That we would all come through it smelling of Roses?"

"Don't be stupid," Josie snarled.

"I'm not the one being stupid Josie, you are. Adonia never left you. She ensured you would live by taking the curse and allowing you to live and fight another day, hoping you would..."

“Who’s to say I won’t die on the next mission?”

“That’s the risk Josie, and the price for freedom. You’ve lived with the oppression, you know freedom only comes to purebloods and even then only to an extent. The only one who is truly free is Voldemort, as the death eaters themselves are enslaved to him....”

“But...”

“But what?” Neville’s voice took on a softer quality as the look of outrage and anger had gone from her face, leaving what was the truth: a scared, confused little girl who had been alone for most of her life and now probably felt more alone than ever.

Throughout the whole exchange the tears had continued to come regardless and now, it seemed, they intensified as Josie stared at him with big, frightened eyes.

“I’m scared of failing though...” she whispered.

“You only fail if you don’t try,” Neville coaxed then added, “Courage isn’t the absence of fear; just the emotion to get through it.”

Josie stared at Neville in a strange way until he opened his arms, and like a small child, Josie obediently walked into them.

Holding her close Josie cried and cried into his shoulder with Neville rubbing small circles on her back while murmuring comforting meaningless words into her ear.

After an hour of solid crying Josie gave a few hic-ups and went still; emotionally as well as physically drained.

“Feel better?” Neville asked. He felt Josie nod into his shoulder.

“I’ll never get over it though...” she whispered

“Yes you will. It may scar, but if anything it’ll give you something to fight for; to ensure she didn’t die for nothing.”

Josie suddenly remembered the stupid cheesy speech she had given about her dad and him fighting in the room of Requirement.

“Dad wouldn’t want me to give up, would he?”

“No, he wouldn’t; take it from someone who knew him well...your father would be disgusted if he knew his only daughter was giving up.”

Josie sat up and wiped her face,

“I’m hungry,” she muttered as her stomach gave a loud rumble.

“I’m not surprised. Dinners over but lets see if the house elves have got anything left over...only don’t tell Hermione that there are house elves here. The last thing we need at the moment is SPEW starting up again.”

“What’s SPEW?” Josie asked as they made their way to the kitchen, still feeling the deep loss and pain from losing Adonia; though somehow lighter now she had properly cried about it.

As they past the lounge and went further down, down into the earth Hermione exited the lounge; having put the place right she was now going to find Hugo and tell him the truth and explain. All she hoped was that he wouldn’t get angry with her and reject her. Seeing Josie walk with Neville down to the kitchens asking about S.P.E.W, even quietly, gave her hope though she made a mental note to asked Neville later who made the food in this place.

Taking a deep breath she walked down the hallway to reunite and, hopefully, reconcile herself with her one and one son: Hugo Ronald Weasley.

AH! Another chapter done and I find I’m enjoying this story more and more. Thanks again to LupinLovesTonks for the Hugo idea.

Please review guys. Let's try and get forty reviews this time. Constructive Critism welcome: believable? Unbelievable? Good? Bad? Terrible? Just make sure you tell me what's wrong with it if you do find it's bad so I can go back and correct it or improve.

Remember, you are the reader, I'm the writer. I can't see the story the way you see it which is why I ask you press the REVIEW button.

Thanks guys xxx

Hermione found Hugo sitting in the reception area, playing wizard's chess with Michael Corner. He was bent over the board, his face squeezed up in concentration as he debated his next move. Giving a small crafty smile he said,

"Knight to F1. Checkmate."

Michael stared at the board in disbelief.

"How...What...You said you had never played before?" he finished accusingly.

"I haven't. It must be genetic."

Hermione held back a laugh. Just like Ron, she thought. Michael seemed to want to say something else, though Hugo had spotted her by the door. Getting up he walked over to her.

Now cleaned up and wearing new clothes the resemblance to Ron was uncanny. His vibrant red hair bushy to the point of curliness, and his big goofy smile made Hermione's heart melt with love as she stared at her only son.

"Hey Hermione, I've just been playing Wizard's chess with Mike..."

"He says he's never played before but I say Merlin's pants to that..." Michael's annoyed voice came from behind Hugo.

"Language Michael. Hugo, would it be alright if I had a private word with you?"

"Course." With a smile at an annoyed Michael, Hermione led Hugo out of the room and down into a small empty room which housed only two chairs and a bed.

Sitting down on one of the hard backed chairs Hermione watched as Hugo threw himself on the bed and looked at her.

"What's up?"

“I was just wondering, how are you enjoying Sanctuary?” A massive smile graced Hugo’s features.

“It’s great. I don’t think I’ve ever been as happy as I am now...”

“Really?” Hermione asked sadly.

“Yeah; I mean my parents died when I was a baby so I was brought up in a half blood orphanage run by Malfoy and Parkinson...” Hermione let out a small growl in her throat at the sound of her nemesis’s name. Hugo continued, “and Hogwarts...well, I’d rather not talk about it...” he looked up at Hermione beseechingly who nodded.

“That’s fine. Josie is the same...”

“How is Josie?” Hugo asked immediately; he hadn’t seen her since they got back from the mission. Not having been very close to either Josie or Adonia he had felt uncomfortable in going to find her.

“She’s getting better. Still morning Adonia’s death, as are we all, but she’s getting better.”

“That’s good,” Hugo paused before saying, “They were very close. The teachers used to think it was odd for a pureblood to be so close to a half blood...”

“My partner was a pureblood and he was best friends with my other best friend who was a half-blood. It’s not uncommon. Well, it shouldn’t be,” Hermione amended.

A comfortable silence fell as both retreated into their thoughts. Hermione wondering how best to breech the subject and Hugo thinking how good it would be if purebloods could be friends with half bloods without bringing the word ‘blood traitor’ down on their head.

“Hugo...what do you know about your parents?” Hermione asked, deciding to take the bull by the horns.

Hugo looked up in surprise.

“Nothing really. At the orphanage they didn’t tell us anything...and the school wasn’t helpful. All they did tell me was my parents had died.” He paused, “Though the death eater who took me to Malfoy Manor...he was wired.”

“How so?” Hermione asked.

Hugo hesitated before deciding to come straight out with it.

“H...He said you were my mum.” He let out a nervous laugh then risked a look at Hermione face which looked like she didn’t know what to say or do.

Nervousness didn’t sit well on Hermione, Hugo thought. She always knew what to do and now, it seemed, she didn’t.

“Hermione, are you alright?”

“It’s true,” Hermione whispered, more to herself than to Hugo.

“Sorry?”

“I said it’s true,” Hermione tried, and failed, to keep her voice steady and the tears back as she gazed at the shocked boy in front of her.

“It...It’s true?”

Hermione nodded, watching him nervously for a reaction.

“You’re really my mum?”

Hermione swallowed the lump forming in her throat, took a deep breath and nodded.

“How...What....I don’t....”

“I was arrested when you were one and your father, Ron Weasley, was killed in the same battle...” Hermione broke off and looked away as an image of Ron lying, his body broken on the floor of the burrow, dead; his eyes glassy.

Hugo was just staring at her as if seeing her for the first time. Hermione began to get nervous...

“I never stopped thinking about you...even in Azkaban...it was the thought of you that kept me sane...I never wanted to leave you, honestly I didn’t...but fate didn’t work that way and...and I have a picture of us you know; Ron me and you,” she garbled while fishing in her pocket for the picture taken at St Mungo’s.

Shoving it in Hugo’s shocked hand she began garbling again,

“I mean I understand if you are angry...it’s only natural...but please Hugo, give me a chance. I never wanted to go...I love you, I love you more than life itself...” her voice trailed off as she realised how disjointed and pathetic she sounded.

“So it’s true then?” Hugo muttered; his voice softer as he gazed at the picture in front of him. The people in the photo certainly looked happy enough with the man he supposed was his dad beaming and looking like the luckiest man on earth and his Hermione holding a bundle; tiredness evident in her face but looking no less happy.

Hermione didn’t reply and Hugo looked up at her, realising she was preparing herself for his rejection. To be honest though, he wasn’t sure how he felt about this revelation. Shocked, certainly, but not angry. He found himself surprised by this. But then, he reasoned, why should I be? It wasn’t as if they could have prevented what happened. Being murdered and arrested and overpowered by death eaters wasn’t something they probably went looking for.

But did they have to of fought? He asked himself, a hint on anger threatening to seep in. Yes they did, he answered himself, because they wanted to let me live in a world of freedom.

He looked up at his mum with tears in his eyes,

“Mum?” Hermione’s head snapped up and brown eyes met brown eyes and in that moment something close to understanding passed between them. The next minute Hugo was in his mum’s arms with Hermione crying though Hugo wasn’t. If anything he was soothing her,

“It’s alright mum, we’re together now. I’ll look after you.” Why he was saying this he didn’t know; shouldn’t it be the other way round, he thought. But then from the sounds of it his dad had died trying to protect him family and Hugo would pick up from where he left off. He was sure the smiling man in the photo would have wanted him to do that.

“You are so like your father Hugo...”

Hugo merely smiled tightly; not completely comfortable but deciding it would probably pass as he got to know Hermione, no mum, better.

The rest of the afternoon was spent talking about everything and anything and by the time the dinner bell rang Hugo felt like her had known his mum for most of his life...well, maybe not that far; but he certainly felt more comfortable around her. What also gave the day a perfect ending was seeing Josie seated next to Neville at the dinner table, for the first time in over two months. Hugo couldn’t help but smile.

Far away in a big cold stone mansion a man was seated in front of a roaring fire in his own study, his friend sitting next to him in a comfortable silence.

To look at both men one would be forgiven for assuming that they had been in a fight of some kind as both were covered in large bruises and cuts. The blond haired man especially seemed bad, as both eyes had been blackened and one was now swollen shut. His face was black and blue with some nasty looking cuts dotted about his face and hands. However the only indicator that he felt any pain was how his hand shook as he poured the Brandy.

“Have you heard from the Dark Lord, regarding the disposing of the woman,” the dark haired man asked. Like his friend he was battered and bruised though nowhere near as bad.

“I have. He wishes it done by Friday at the latest.” The dark haired man nodded and took a sip of his Brandy.

“May I enquire as to how?”

“Suffocation.” The dark haired man wrinkled up his nose in distaste.

“Rather crude, don’t you think?”

“Why? She suffocated herself in her sleep while her husband lay asleep next to her oblivious,” the blond haired man replied.

“A simple killing curse will do the job nicely...”

“The Dark Lord has specifically requested I do not use the killing curse after what happened the last time.”

“Ah yes, killing off the youngest member of the Osborne family, one of our oldest most purest family...though not as old as my own, or yours for that matter...”

“It wasn’t intended for her. If the dratted girl hadn’t jumped in front of the curse...”

“I’ll say! Though what’s done is done. All you can do now, though, is regaining the Dark Lords favour by killing off your wife...”

“As I remember correctly, you were the one fighting Granger and let her get away...”

The Dark haired man winced at the reminder,

“Yes and the Dark Lord has let his displeasure be known. Though he has been merciful to both of us by allowing us to live and redeem ourselves in this one act...”

“True,” The blond replied, his ice blue eyes glaring at the flames at the task he was set to do. It wasn’t that he actually cared for the woman, oh no. She was a filthy blood traitor whom he had married for convenience and now her time was up. It was just that he was loath to do it in a such a crude muggle way.

“When shall you do it?” His companion asked.

“Tonight,” the blond replied, “When she is in bed. The faster it is done, the more pleased the dark lord will be when I tell him.”

“Where is she?”

“Probably fawning over the triplets. That’s another reason I want rid of her; I’m not having my heirs pampered. They will be given everything that benefits their station in life; though I won’t have them pampered like she is doing. My parents took the strict standoffish hands off approach to child rearing and I turned out fine.”

“As did mine,” the dark haired man responded, “best way as it keeps them in line.”

At this the two companions fell into a comfortable silence, the only sound the clinking crystal as they made a toast.

If any of them had bothered to turn around they would have noticed a shadow just outside the partially open doorway. The shadow slipped away as fast as it came and up the stairs towards the nursery not wanting to hear any more.

Actually, the shadow was in fact a woman who had come down to tell her husband about the triplets, as a besotted mother should. Only she had paused at the doorway, overhearing her husband and the headmaster talking about her death as casually as they were talking about the weather.

This had been the final conformation in her mind that she needed to leave, that her husband was a heartless bastard as her eldest daughter had always proclaimed.

Walking into the nursery the woman dismissed the nanny who was snoozing by the fire and, after she was gone, hurriedly started packing some toys, a few clothes and nappies into a large bag that was used by the nanny William employed when she took them out round the vast gardens. The woman herself wasn't permitted to do this as 'it was below her station to do such tasks', despite being the children's mother.

Transfiguring a small toy broomstick into a triplet carrier she slipped it on her upper body with two satchels at the front and one in the back. Walking over to the cots she levitated Saul, the youngest of the triplets out and into the back satchel then placed Jessica and Luke into the front pockets before slipping out of the nursery and down the back stairs into the kitchen, which was mercifully empty. Opening a few cupboards she stuffed some bread, a flask of water, the babies bottle and some milk in to the bag, which was getting rather full by now. Opening the back door she apparated to the first place she could think of: Sherwood Forest in Nottingham, deep in the heart of the forest.

The forest held special memories for her as her father, before he died, had grown up in Nottingham near the Forest so every time she came up here to see her grandparents as a child she had played in here; though to be fair she had never strayed this far in without her father.

The cries of the triplets broke her thoughts and Mary spent the next fifteen minutes calming them down from the uncomfortable feeling of apparition. It was only when the babies had stopped crying and after Mary had cast a warming charm over them all she sat on some dried leaves under the canopy and fed the babies, one by one before placing them on a makeshift bed of dried leaves and moss next to her. Predictably, the babies fell asleep with the warming charm over them and a large blanket laid over them.

It was only once the triplets were asleep that the enormity of what she had done hit her. William would have death eaters and ministry officials all over the country looking for them by morning if not already. But she couldn't let them take them away from her; couldn't allow William to bring them up by himself; moulding them into his own image.

They were her babies and she would die for them. This thought brought about an image of Josie and tears began coursing down her cheeks as she realised how badly she had treated and let down her eldest daughter and only link to the one man she had ever loved: James Burns.

Mary shook her head. Self pity wouldn't feed them, nor would it keep them warm or safe. Mary needed to think of a place they could go where no one would think of looking for them. O'Rylie manor was out as William would look there first; being her husband he had complete control over her finances and heritage. She needed somewhere safe where the death eaters couldn't get her.

Mary spent the rest of the night thinking over where she could go, each idea ending up dead ends.

It was only after she had given the triplets their morning milk, having to continually refill the milk she had, and had eaten a chunk of the bread she repacked everything and placed the triplets back in the carrier and, placing a dissillusment charm over herself, started walking through the forest.

After walking for half the day the triplets began to get tired as well as hungry so Mary decided to set up camp under a large beech tree. After casting some protective enchantments round the spot she refilled the nearly empty flask of milk and fed the triplets, giving them some squashed berries she had picked, as well as some bread soaked in milk though she was begging to despair.

What little food she had brought was running out. She needed to find someplace safe soon, if not for her safety then the triplets.

However by the end of the week of constant wanderings she was begging to worry. She had found a lovely spot with a clear rushing stream as well as berry bushes. And magic could refill what she was running out of, though the bread and cheese had run out ages ago and the deep despair was beginning to set in as she thought about sending the triplets back to White manor if only to keep them alive....but then the thought of how William would treat them came to her mind and she knew she had to keep on going for them.

If she had learnt one thing from her disastrous relationship with Josie it was that parents shouldn't quit and should always be there for their kids regardless of personal feeling. The only casualty was that she had learnt this lesson too late to save her relationship with Josie.

Josie...where was she? She was safe and with Hermione, Mary had heard, from what Astoria Malfoy had dropped about the raid on their home. Mary sorely wished she could be with her daughter now; wished that they could start again as a family: Josie, herself and the triplets. Wished that James was still alive and none of this had happened...though if wishes were pounds beggars wouldn't exist.

By the second week her desperation turned into full blown despair and panic. She had gotten quiet good at finding berries and the triplets were getting the lion's share of the meals, so they weren't starving; however how long they could carry on like this Mary didn't know.

James had always said she was never any good at planning and he was right; being in Ravenclaw that was odd though no less odd than the Gryffindorish move she had done in removing the children from the White estate and running away with them herself.

It was Friday evening of the second week and Mary had just finished feeding, bathing and changing the triplets and put them onto the soft makeshift bed she had become accustomed to making them, when she snapped. She was filthy, hungry, cold and penniless. Not to mention alone. Mary would have loved to stay in one place and build a sort of makeshift house, but she was terrified of the death eaters catching up with them so kept on the move.

Sitting down on the ground she huddled up into herself as she watched from behind a massive trunk in case someone crept up on them in the night.

It was just coming round to midnight when she heard voices coming closer.

“…Didn’t see nothing and no point in doing this. I mean, so what if Ernie said he saw a woman with babies trampling round the forest…what’s the likelihood of it…”

“The likelihood of it, Hugo, is that there is maybe a woman on the run with her children and is dying somewhere in the forest; and it’s up to us to find her…”

“If she exists.”

“Has your mother ever told you how much like Ron you are?” Mary’s breath caught in her throat as she heard this. These people knew Ron? Could it be the same Ron though? And Hugo....hadn’t that been Hermione and Ron Weasleys son, thought dead after Hermione’s arrest thirteen years ago.

Deciding she had nothing to lose she poked her head over the trunk and saw a boy, about fourteen with vibrant red hair and a tall lanky frame standing next to a tall well built man with a round face and brown shoulder length hair.

It couldn’t be, could it?

“Neville!” The word was out before she could hold it back and the man’s head snapped round; his wand drawn and his stance aggressive as he looked round for the source of the voice; the protective enchantments preventing him from seeing Mary. Picking up the triplets and hurriedly picking up the already packed bag; Mary waved her wand and the protective enchantments dropped.

“Neville.” Immediately after running out Mary found two wands pointed in her chest.

“Is this her?” the younger asked.

“How do you know my name?” Neville demanded.

“Neville, it’s me...Mary Wh...Burns.”

Neville squinted at the broken looking filthy woman in front of him. Her blond hair was streaked with grey and her green eyes looked on the verge of giving up. Her face was hollowed, indicating she hadn’t been eating. She certainly looked like Mary, despite how defeated she looked. However there was only one way to check.

“What did James call you in private?”

Mary turned a bright shade of red,

“Neville...”

“Answer me, or I’ll hex you into eternity.” He deliberately put a fair amount of aggression in his voice to get the point across.

“He called me...”

“What? He called you what?” he snarled.

Mary turned an even deeper shade of red.

“MaryContrary after that muggle nursery rhyme,” she whispered.

Neville looked at her and decided that it really was her. No death eater would admit to knowing a muggle nursery rhyme.

Lowering his wand he was surprised to find her wand pointed at him,

“Where did James and I get married?”

“In a marquee, behind the O’Rylie Manor.”

“It really is you,” Mary whispered. Before she could say any more though, or before Neville could comment, the hunger of the last two weeks caught up with her and the light headedness that she had pointedly ignored took over. Mixed in with the shock of seeing Neville after nearly a decade Mary watched as the world started to spin before everything went black.

Hahaha, I am so evil to leave you here. Well the updates will be quicker form now as I’m really getting into this story and I can’t wait a week to update any more (patience has never been my strong point). Anyway, thanks guys and please leave a review. Lets try and hit forty four xxx

“…and therefore the ministry has decreed that any student caught in any act that violates this decree, or is connected to the new children’s club called the angels will be immediately expelled before being escorted to the ministry; where you will be dealt with accordingly.”

Rodolphus Lestrange’s voice boomed out across the great hall, echoing throughout the hallways beyond as his eyes roamed over the student body threateningly; resting slightly longer on the Gryffindor table.

Each upturned face had terror written on it with the exception of a few; the Bones boy being one of them. Ever since those two blasted girls had gone missing a year ago Bones had taken it upon himself to be as rude and ‘creative’ towards the teachers and the décor of Hogwarts as possible. He now held the record for the amount of detentions any student had received within a year. Filthy blood traitor, Rodolphus thought viciously. Hopefully this new revelation would put him in his place as the filthy blood traitor that he was.

Trevor himself just stared back into the headmaster’s face, keeping what fear he was feeling well hidden as he had learnt early on not to show fear as it gave the enemy an advantage over you. Hiding his feelings was something he had become quite good at recently. However if the ministry thought they could get him and his friends to behave through threats and blackmail they had another thing coming. He may not have been sorted into Gryffindor, which was renowned for their courage; but he had been sorted into Hufflepuff: where his loyalty towards his friends and what he believed in, was absolute.

No threats of Azkaban would work on him.

However despite the looming threat of Azkaban, or the fear that was now a permanent fixture in his life; Trevor Bones found it immensely satisfying that the ministry, mostly made up death eaters hand picked by the Dark Lord himself, had to go to such measures. After all he was only a fifteen year old, but the fact that they saw him as such a threat filled him with a smug satisfaction and he let it show on his face as the headmaster looked at him.

Rodolphus's face twisted into a black scowl as he saw the boy's smugness. The boy was going to be trouble; but then there were more ways than one to skin a Kneezal and Rodolphus knew himself how to play people at their own games. Maybe targeting the Ballard girl or that Corner boy in Ravenclaw might do the trick. Hufflepuffs were disgustingly loyal to their friends and any threat would bring the pathetic boy to his knees. The thought cheered Rodolphus up somewhat and he finished his start of school feast speech with slightly more enthusiasm.

Trevor tuned out as Rodolphus started listing the banned products and what was the proper code of conduct for the school; mostly for the benefit of the first years. It was only when food appeared on the plates in front of him that helped him to some chicken drumsticks. The start of term feast was really the only time half bloods and blood traitors could eat what they wanted. The death eaters saw it as a generous treat. Trevor saw it as sick as it gave the firsties hope which was dashed away cruelly the next day at breakfast.

Rodolphus took a deep drink of his wine as he surveyed the various students he had been told to keep an eye on this year. Most of the offenders like Law, Jamison and Macleay had left and were now at the ministry where they were being kept under a close watch.

Because these three regular offenders had left school last year it would be interesting to see who would step forward to fill the shoes. Bones, Ballard and Corner were three who would try but they were only in fifth year. He'd keep a close eye on the sixth years and seventh years as they were learning darker spells and experience had taught him that they weren't above using the Dark Arts to their own advantage. Usually such creativity would have thrilled Rodolphus, and he would be telling the Dark Lord of such and such who was good at manipulating spells to get their own gain; but when the Dark Arts were used against him, a man who had been brought up and used them his whole life, was a different matter entirely.

After the feast was ended Trevor left the great hall, and followed a few sixth years through the door next to the main staircase and down another set of staircases and down a corridor, where at the end was a still life painting.

“Apples,” one of the sixth years in front of him said; and the painting swung open to reveal the warm yellow and black common room beyond. The Hufflepuff common room was large and circular with Hufflepuff banners hanging from the ceiling; with a roaring warm stone fireplace opposite the portrait; plush yellow arm chairs and yellow sofas were dotted round the room with two tunnels leading off at the side to the dormitories. Trevor smiled as the friendliness of the place washed over him. At least here he felt marginally safe.

Throwing himself down in one of the larger armchairs by the fire he stared into their flickering depths as he let the heat wash over him, as he let his thoughts roam over the upcoming year; Josie and her whereabouts; Adonia and weather she was alright; over the new recruits from the new fourth years...people had shown a lot of interest in what he’s had to say on the train. Fourth years and above was his rules; below fourth year was unacceptable as they weren’t mature enough either mentally or physically; not to mention they were easy prey for the teachers. As much as he wanted more recruits in the TA, he couldn’t afford to place them in that danger. He’d had to turn away quite a few interested people on the train purely because they were too young.

So wrapped up in his thoughts he didn’t realise the common room had gone silent and that their head of house, Selwyn, had come in until Trevor heard him speak.

“Although I don’t usually come here the headmaster has asked me to have a word with you about your behaviour this term. A few of you have decided to act...uncaringly towards the staff last term; and I hope that this term your behaviour will be rectified as I will have no problems with handing any unruly students over to the ministry; or taking appropriate measures to ensure obedience in this school is kept.”

He paused and glared at the assembled students, pausing on Trevor. Still talking but not taking his eyes off the fifth year Selwyn continued, “However I have learnt from experience that detentions don’t seem to have any effect on some of you so to ensure obedience I will be

more...creative in my punishments. The headmaster has some ideas in mind and as I don't like to spoil his surprises I will leave it up to you to find out. However, what I will say is to the first years: if you follow your older student's examples you may find you will be the first to taste the headmaster's new ideas."

"That's not fair!" Trevor spoke without thinking. Selwyn locked eyes with the boy and gave a wintry smile.

"Life is not fair, Bones; you of all people should know that. However, to continue: If the conduct of this house is perfect with no...misdemeanours, then no punishment will befall any of you."

He gave them all a sadistic smile before continuing in an ordinary voice as if he hadn't delivered such a threat,

"No all of you, to bed. You have a long day of lessons tomorrow." Then, without another word, he walked out of the common room slamming the portrait behind him.

Immediately the common room was full of talking and Trevor found himself swamped by students and their voices.

"Please, listen and be quiet..." Seeing as his pleas were getting them no where he cast a Soranous charm on himself and said in a booming voice, "QUIET!"

The common room fell silent and Trevor stood up on the chair and took the spell off.

"Now I don't know what they have planned, but what I do know is that we have to work harder to fight; and work harder at not getting caught..."

"They'll know..." someone in the crowd yelled.

"So? Don't you get it? The fact that they feel they have to threaten us with ministry decrees and threats towards younger year's means we are getting to them. It's what we wanted all along and now the

work's paying off," Trevor snapped back, "No one said it was going to be easy and this just proves it...."

"Bones, my brother is in first year. They'll target him," a sixth year snapped.

If Trevor was going to be honest, he was scared at these new measures which seemed to make Selwyn delighted, and to an extent it made him uneasy. It was down heartening but this was war and in war nothing was easy. They needed to be more careful, maybe tone down the talking back a bit and hopefully the first years would manage to get through their first year for the most part unscathed. He'd have to have a word with them about how they acted too.

"Look," he continued, "I'll...I'll talk to Jamie; and Ellen, if you could stay behind? Good. We'll figure something out, don't worry. I'm not going to put the first years in the firing line. If needs be, I'll put myself up for punishment instead." He didn't like it; but what other alternative was there?

The crowd mumbled a bit as they all drifted away, some to various chairs but most drifted to the dormitories. Sitting back down Trevor took a deep breath as he tried, and failed, to try and find a way around this obstacle. Ellen came and sat down next to him,

"W...W...What are we g....going t....t....t do, Trev?" Ellen stammered.

"I don't know," Trevor muttered.

"Well, w...what would J....J...Josie do?"

"Josie would probably dive straight in headfirst," Trevor mumbled and allowed himself a small smile at the thought of his friend.

Ellen smiled back at him and put her hand in his. Trevor found that he liked it and squeezed her hand which she squeezed back reassuringly,

“W...we'll find a way,” she said. Trevor just stared into the flames, unsure.

The next morning Trevor watched as Ellen comforted a half blood first year, who was staring at the pitiful amount on his plate with tears in his eyes. Ellen really was the most remarkable girl he knew. Not fiery like Josie or quietly courageous like Adonia. But she was loyal, kind, strong and very good at listening. Trevor had found that he had become more and more dependant on her in the last year and he felt that he might need her even more this year. He knew his feelings for her were slightly more than friendly but he couldn't start going out with her as it would give the death eaters someone to target; and he wouldn't let that happen.

Ellen was special to him; whether she felt the same way he didn't know and he lacked the confidence to ask; however if he survived the upcoming war and they won; then he would ask her out properly and see where it went from there.

Tearing his attention away from Ellen he concentrated on his own food; considerably less than last year and he supposed he had been dubbed a blood traitor by the teachers. Cutting up his bacon he thought about the problem regarding the first years and decided to lie low for a while. He would spread the word that the first meeting for the TA would be this Saturday and they could all discuss what to do and then take a vote.

Until then he wouldn't do anything and would spread the word for the others not to do anything.

However this proved more difficult than he thought as was proved in Blood Studies first thing.

Rabastan stood at the front of the classroom and flicked his wand at the board where the words OWLS appeared, and he went on to explain about what they would be covering this year and how he expected all of them to get at least an E. Trevor didn't care about OWLS and like he had with Rodolphus' speech, tuned out until Capricorn Malfoy (the youngest in the family) handed out a test paper and Trevor stared at it wondering what he was supposed to do.

Glancing round and seeing everyone writing he took out his quill and ink and turned over the first page; and realised this was an assessment on how much he remembered from the previous four years.

Taking a deep breath and wracking his brains he forced himself to answer, preying that none of the members of the TA in his class would get creative and wait for his say so before they did.

Unfortunately this wasn't to be as Rabastan had taken to prowling the aisles, looking over students shoulders at they wrote; tutting mockingly every now and then but not saying anything until he reached David Foreson, a fifth year Gryffindor.

“What is this Foreson?” He snarled, taking the assessment paper.

“My answers, sir,” David replied in what could only be called an insolent tone.

“Answers eh?” Rabastan snapped, flicking through the test sheet, reading the essay question and how Foreson had managed to write three pages on how blood purity was a load of crap; giving examples and explaining his reasons for them. It was a well written essay but the contents made Rabastan’s blood boil. Trevor caught David’s eyes and shook his head frantically, mouthing the word ‘no’. David chose to ignore him. The Griffindors had always been harder to get through to, as they had a tendency to not listen to a word of advice concerning common sense and a passion for rule breaking.

“Well Foreson,” Rabastan replied easily, giving back David his paper, “I’ll be writing your name,” he flicked his wand and David’s name appeared on the board, “on the board.”

Then, incredibly, he smiled down at the boy.

“Continue.” Then he walked back to his desk where he began planning next week’s lesson.

David watched him with a mixture of apprehension and relief.

Bending over his own work Trevor wondered what this meant. Did it mean that David was going to be arrested? Or that a first year would take the flack? Or did it mean something else entirely? Continuing his writing on why blood purity was important he put it out of his mind until the bell rang for break.

Quickly writing his name at the top of his sheet of parchment he handed it in and ran after David.

“David! HEY, DAVID!” David turned round, a smile on his face.

“Can you believe it Trev? He didn’t even do anything aside from write my name on the board. Never knew it would get so easy....”

“Exactly, it’s too easy. Something’s going on.” Then he told David what Selwyn had said the night before,

“Nott didn’t say anything about firsties, he just said appropriate measures would be taken,” David replied, “Whatever that means...”

“You might get arrested David...”

“So what?”

“We need to have a team talk about this David. On Saturday same place, same time as usual. I don’t believe for a minute you got off that easily...something is going on and I don’t like it at all...”

“You worry too much Trev. I’ll spread the word though,” he added, then he was gone; lost in the throng of students leaving Trevor very worried and confused until he realised that he was needed in History of famous Purebloods, and hurried off up to the classroom where he got to his seat a minute before the bell rang.

“Books out, quills ready to take notes; This year will be harder for most of you thick heads than others. I’ll be assessing your notes throughout the term and, if for whatever reason I feel you aren’t

working hard enough," an evil smile graced Avery's face, "I'll be forced to take, ah, appropriate measures." He paused to allow his words to have maximum impact, "Now, open your books to page 53. Mordred the Magnificent was famous for a few reasons..."

By the time Trevor left the lesson he had five pages of notes on Mordred the Magnificent; a famous pure-blooded witch whose favourite sport was muggle hunting. Born in the twelfth century she had become renowned for killing fifty two muggles in one hunt. It made Trevor sick. But that wasn't what worried him the most: David had his name written once more upon the board along with Jamie who had been caught staring into space part way through the lesson.

As the week progressed the names on the board gradually became longer though nothing happened to the students. Trevor and Ellen both managed to stay off the list though David didn't. He seemed to be getting more reckless and it was only when Ellen whispered his dad had been killed in the holidays after 'suspicious activity' in the ministry that Trevor understood.

By Friday David's name was on all of the boards and held the highest number of times it had been written. Trevor himself had stopped trying to tell him though most of the other TA members had gotten the message and seemed content to wait for Saturday's meeting after breakfast.

This was why what happened came as a complete shock.

After school on Friday the whole student body was called to the grand hall, sitting at there respective tables wondering what was going on.

Two teachers, Dolohov and Amycus Carrow stood by the doors with Jugson, Alecto Carrow lining the walls. The heads of houses stood with Bellatrix and Rodolphus on the raised dais. The staff table had been moved back and in Rodolphus's hand was a long scroll of parchment.

"You are all wondering why you have been called here," his voice boomed out, "as many of you know your teachers haven't actively punished bad behaviour; merely writing your name on the board. I am

happy to say that there are only two regular offenders that I wish to punish tonight and that most people have taken my words at the start of term to heart. Now, you are all going to witness what happens when you regularly offend. This is the first punishment. Once you have undergone this three times the ministry will be called in and you will be expelled. Now Bellatrix, if you would?"

Bellatrix went behind the dais to where a locked door was, opened it and yanked out a first year girl wearing the Ravenclaw colours. Bellatrix brought her to the front of the stage where everyone could see her: Long blond hair flowing down her back loosely, a long face and bright green eyes which were furiously blinking back tears. She wasn't much of a looker but her hair was defiantly her best feature.

However despite her tears Trevor couldn't see anything physically wrong with her in terms of punishment, though the electrical tension in the room was reaching its climax and he felt on edge as he watched Bellatrix tie the girl's hands in front of her.

The whole hall was silent as Rodolphus came up and yanked her head back; waving his wand with his free hand so her head was held back under the charm so everyone could see her face.

Looking at her Trevor wasn't sure how long she could hold back the tears though she seemed to be making a good job of it as she stood erect, her face staring straight ahead.

"Eleanor De'Marcy; you have had your name written down fifteen times this week due to back talk and mocking the history of purebloods. You will take your punishment in front of the school before going with Professor Mcnair for him to deal with, as your head of house." Then, pulling from his pocket a large pair of rusty scissors, he listed up a strand of her hair. In that instant Trevor, and everyone else, knew what he was going to do.

It took less than five minutes for Rodolphus to shave off most of her hair. What little hair Rodolphus had left was in tuffs, sticking out at odd angles.

The humiliation and mental torture had been too much for the small eleven year old and the tears poured down her face, making it all red and blotchy.

Trevor felt anger swim up in his chest at the mental abuse the death eaters were inflicting as well as pity and sympathy for the girl in equal measure and it was all he could do just to look at her, willing her to be strong.

Rodolphus took off the spell and the girl dropped to all fours, crying her heart out as the strain took its toll on her.

“Maybe next time you will think twice before you mock your betters, girl. Professor?”

Macnair dragged the girl up and held her, still facing the now horror struck hall as David’s name was called and he was brought forward and the same happened to him, leaving only a small ridiculous looking tuff at the top of his head. David didn’t cry, though his face was beetroot; whether this was from anger or humiliation Trevor couldn’t tell.

After cutting the boys hair Rodolphus retrieved from behind him a cane and after delivering ten cuts to the backsides in front of everyone he gave the boy to Nott and both death eaters held the students in a cruel vice as Rodolphus addressed the student body.

“Now, I hope you have all learnt a lesson. The names will be taken off the board tomorrow and I hope all of you will bear what you have witnessed tonight in mind before you go off and upset us. Remember this next week in your lessons. Dismissed.”

“He is e...e...evil w....w....with a ca...capital E,” Ellen fumed later in the common room. Everyone had gone straight to bed, none of them really wanting to stay up after the demonstration in the hall.

“ Question is,” Trevor answered slowly while staring into the flickering dancing flames, “What are we going to do about it...”

“F....f....f....fight; that’s w....what.”

Trevor just smiled up at his friend, whose usually pale face was now blotchy red with anger.

“Yeah, your right...but we’ll keep the firsties out of it, and warn them about the ‘proper’ conduct to keep em safe.”

Ellen nodded before sighing and slipping down next to Trevor, allowing him to put his arm round her in comfort.

“I....I’m s....scared Trev.”

“Me too. But we’ll pull through, don’t worry. We knew what we were signing up for when Josie put forward the idea a year ago. Now Jose is gone we need to carry on for her, and for ourselves,” he added

Ellen just nodded into his chest as Trevor held her close; thinking how right this felt. He looked down at Ellen and she looked up at him. The next thing Trevor knew they were kissing. This being his first time, Trevor felt clumsy and awkward and though the kiss didn’t last long Trevor felt happier than he had in a long time when they pulled apart.

Feeling suddenly light headed Trevor looked down into Ellen’s eyes and smiled boyishly.

“You’re a good kisser.” As soon as the words were out of his mouth Trevor could have slapped himself and dunked his head in the toilet for good measure. The smile on Ellen’s lips faltered slightly and Trevor rushed in to try and fix what looked like an unfixable situation,

“No...I mean you are a good kisser...but I don’t want you just for that you know...I mean, not that your not desirable or anything” Oh Merlin could this get any worse? Taking a deep breath Trevor pulled away and looked Ellen straight in the face, “I mean,” he continued, “I want to wait until the end of the war then we can go out...be a proper couple. They already have their eye on me and if they know we are going out then they’ll target you...”

Ellen silenced him with a kiss, slightly deeper this time but not long enough, to Trevor's mind at least.

"I don't care Trev. I'm an h...ha...half-blood so t...they'll take an...any excuse. I don't k...know if I'll l...live...."

"Don't say that," Trevor said, suddenly fierce.

Ellen gave him a quick kiss on his cheek.

"I...its tr...true. I...I want to e...enjoy this." Then she smiled and the smile lit up her whole face and Trevor found himself nodding dumbly regardless of himself.

"W...We'll k...keep it s....secret though," she finished, somewhat solemnly and Trevor nodded again, hating himself for it. "N...N....Not your f....fault though."

"I know but..."

"You can't h....help who you are T...Trev; any m...more than I can." She smiled again and got up and started heading for the dormitories, "G...Good night."

"' Nite" Trevor replied in a daze, watching her go.

He sat where he was for the next half hour watching the spot where she had disappeared; his mind replaying the kiss. It was only when the clock struck midnight that Trevor remembered where he was and, forcing his legs to obey his brain, he walked down to his dormitory and, after changing into his pyjamas, climbed into bed: his mind still replaying the kiss. Even in sleep his mind refused to let go and his dreams were filled with images of Ellen and himself in paradise with no threat of death and danger looming.

"Trev...Trev wake up!"

Very reluctantly Trevor opened his eyes, reluctant to part from his dreams.

“What?”

“Selwyn has just come in. Says we need to get to the great hall quickly...” It was Thomas Miller, his one and only roommate.

“What time is it?” Trevor groaned.

“Seven am.”

Way too early. In fact, it was disgustingly early for a Saturday. Only odd, strange people got up at this hour; but, remembering the night before, Trevor dragged himself up. Dragging his crumpled robes over his head he followed Thom out of the room and up towards the great hall where the rest of the school was assembled in what seemed like an even more depressed silence than before. Slipping into the empty seat beside Ellen, Trevor whispered quietly so it wouldn’t carry in the dead silence,

“What’s happening?”

Ellen merely stared at her plate but jerked her head towards the high table. Looking up any trace of a good mood vanished as there, sitting in the great golden glint chair, was Lord Voldemort himself.

I’m finding I love cliffy’s more and more as time goes by. But this was dark. Very dark. Anyway, please review. Let’s aim for fifty this time.

Love you all. Xx

“How dare she? I mean, how dare she come here and expect me to welcome her with open arms...and Hermione does nothing; absolutely nothing!” Josie fumed, pacing backwards and forwards in the small space that was her floor space in her room.

Neville sat on the bed, watching her carefully. It had been a week now since Neville had brought Mary back from the forest, unconscious, along with the triplets. It would be an understatement to say Josie didn’t like the arrangements. This was the fifth time Josie had tried to talk Hermione out of letting her mother stay here; but Hermione could be as stubborn as Josie and refused each time thus making Neville the person who had to listen to Josie let off steam.

“I understand why you feel this way Josie, but look at the bright side; at least she left him...”

“Only when her own life was threatened! When my life was threatened she did nothing!”

Suddenly exhausted from being angry for the past week solid she slumped down next to Neville and let him put his arm round her.

“It’s not fair Neville,” she mumbled.

“I know. But at the end of the day Josie, you don’t have to talk to her or the triplets: you can just ignore her you know. Sanctuary is big enough for you to have nothing to do with her.”

“What if she joins in the rebellion though and I’m forced to partner with her,” Josie wailed, determined to be melodramatic about the whole thing. Neville held back a smile.

“I know Mary and she won’t join in, believe me....”

“Bet she will, just to spite me.”

“But, speaking hypothetically, if she does then I don’t think Hermione would be cruel enough to partner you with her.”

Josie absorbed this with a sulky look on her face before suddenly blurting out

“But it’s not fair. Why here? Why not somewhere else; like abroad?”

“Because abroad have their own problems to deal with. Currently, Sanctuary is the safest place possible...we’ve been over this Josie.”

Josie jumped up and glared at Neville, her hands on her hips and her eyes narrowed to thin angry narrow slits.

“Fine! I should have known you’d be on Hermione’s side...”

“Josie...” Neville began reasonably

“No! I hate her! I don’t want anything to do with her after....after everything!”

Then she stormed off, slamming the door in a truly spectacular way which made the frame move at least an inch. Rolling his eyes at her typical teenager attitude, though sympathising to an extent as she did have a valid point, or point’s he amended. Sighing he got up, suddenly hungry and in need for something to eat.

Mary herself had just been discharged from the hospital wing and her first priority was to

check if the triplets were alright. She was putting off seeing Josie as she knew there would be a confrontation and she wanted to feel stronger for when it came. Mary knew she had acted shamefully in regard to her eldest daughter and as a mother should have worked harder to protect her. But what was done was done, as Hermione had said, and she needed, no wanted, to make a fresh start.

Finding the triplets in the lounge, playing with Hermione and Hugo, Mary smiled before coming further into the room and sitting down next to Hermione.

“Are you alright?” Hermione asked her, her finger in Saul’s hand as he made baby noises.

“I’m taking each day at a time,” Mary answered honestly.

“Have you seen Josie yet?”

Mary merely shook her head and leaned down to pick up Jessica who had started crying.

“You can’t avoid her for ever Mary, so there is no point in trying. James...”

“James is dead, Hermione,” Mary snapped with tears in her eyes,

Hermione’s eyes hardened. It didn’t take a lot to set Mary off lately.

“James died for his family. He would be appalled if he knew what had become of you both, and even more appalled that you are actually avoiding your daughter.”

“It’s not like that Hermione...”

“Then tell me Mary, what is it like?”

Before Mary could answer the door opened and Neville walked in, chewing on a chicken leg.

“Did you speak to Josie?” Hermione asked, standing up. Neville nodded,

“Swe lebt ib a bood. Dought wuw ber doen bo...”

“Swallow Neville, please,” Hermione snapped as little particles of food flew everywhere, spraying her face. Swallowing and looking very sheepish Neville tried again,

“She left in a mood. Thought you were going to partner her up with Mary on a mission.” Mary stared at the floor.

“Since when? Where in Merlin’s name did she get that idea from?” Hermione asked, confused.

“No idea.” Neville took another bite of his chicken and swallowed this time before speaking, “But you might want to speak to her, give her something to take her mind off-” he indicated Mary with his head. Hermione sighed.

“There’s only surveillance at the moment...”

“Yeah, I went on surveillance the other day,” Hugo remarked, “was outside the ministry with mum.”

“Really?” Neville asked more out of politeness than anything.

“Yeah; the grass grew a quarter of an inch. That was as interesting as it got.”

Hermione frowned at her son,

“That’s enough Hugo. We all do our bit...”

“Josie finds Surveillance as boring as me, mum; she won’t thank you if you double her shifts: even if it is in the ministry...”

“You allow Josie to go into the ministry?” Mary asked suddenly, alarmed.

“Of course! We need information of what goes on...”

“Alone? Without any sort of protection?”

“Like you care,” Hugo muttered under his breath. Being in Josie’s year and becoming quite close to her recently he was completely on

Josie's side on this. Not a neutral like Neville or his mum: he was a Josie supporter.

Hermione ignored her son's comment.

"She always goes in under a strict disillusionment charm and even then she always goes with either Ernie or Terry..."

"But she's only fourteen..."

"Fifteen actually," Hugo put in helpfully. "She was fifteen last month."

"Hugo," Hermione warned. Like any sane teenager when their mother used that tone Hugo fell silent.

"She's still in one piece isn't she?" Hermione asked.

"But for how long..."

"Enough Mary. Josie is fine and will remain so. She is fantastic at Defence and, in case you didn't know, isn't above using the dark arts to get out of a sticky situation," Hermione replied thinking of White.

"You allow her..."

"Oh stop playing the concerned mother, it doesn't suit you," Hugo said in the most tactless way possible; proving once again he was his father's son. A very, very awkward silence followed this statement; the only noises being the triplets who were still playing happily on the floor.

"Hugo, go to your room," Hermione said at last.

"But..."

"Now, Hugo!" Hugo made a half growl half sigh in his throat and stormed out, slamming the door behind him.

“Ah the joys of being fifteen again,” Neville murmured to himself.

“I’m sorry Mary...” Hermione began.

“He’s right though,” Mary broke through, “It doesn’t suit me.”

Hermione didn’t know how to respond to this statement without out right lying, so settled for saying nothing at all.

Mary stood up.

“Could you look after the triplets...I need to think for a bit...” Mary asked getting up and walking towards the door

“Yeah, of course...” Hermione started but was cut off by the door clicking shut after Mary.

Mary walked down the hallway and into the reception area and up into the forest. Sitting down behind an old oak she let the tears flow as the reality of the situation sunk in. Hermione and Neville and the others at Sanctuary hadn’t said it but they didn’t need to: they believed she was a bad mother as well. Why punish the boy? All he did was tell the truth.

“Look after Josie for me, Mary...”

James’s voice crystal clear, more clear than it had been in years, came back; echoing round her head. Well she had failed him that way: look after Josie? Laughable looking back.

Mary stared at the bark on the tree for twenty minutes before getting sick of self pity. Hermione was right, James would be appalled if he could see what she had become...standing up Mary fought back the sudden wave of dizziness and waited until the ground stopped rolling before walking back down into Sanctuary.

Walking into the lounge she found Hermione...

“Hermione?”

Hermione looked up from what the piece of parchment she was reading, and smiled at Mary,

“You okay?”

“I...I want to join up...to fight I mean.”

Hermione was thrown for words; out of everything this was the last thing she had expected from Mary.

Mary walked over to the collage and looked at a picture of James at Ron's and Hermione's wedding day, his arm slung about someone...it had been her but the photo had been ripped in two: probably by Josie.

“James told me to look after Josie, before he died I mean. I'm not going to lie: Bellatrix Lestrange would probably be a better mother than I've been but...” her fingers traced over her beloved first husband's face, smiling as he laughed in the picture.

“Mary?” Hermione had gotten up and come over to her.

“ You were right in one thing Hermione,” Mary seemed to be speaking from a long way away as she took a trip down memory lane, “James would be appalled. Probably the only reason Josie is still alive is because he took it upon himself to protect her in various ways...I want to honour his memory by doing what he always wanted me to do and that is to fight...”

“I don't want you to sign up out of guilt Mary...it have got to be for the right reasons...” Hermione started.

“They are for the right reasons,” Mary responded, her eyes fixed on the picture before her, “I've lived with the guilt of not doing more to protect James for fifteen years and because of that I pushed Josie away...James used to say when we were going out that I had more courage in me than I knew. I just had to stop being so careful all the

time. It took courage to leave White estate with the triplets and it took courage for me to call out to Neville...if James was right in that then maybe he was right in fighting back."

Hermione just stared at her,

"What about White?" Hermione finally asked.

"What about him? Any affection I had for him left as soon as he placed the wedding band on my finger. If you think I'm going to go back to him you can think again Hermione."

"I didn't..."

"You thought it though. But I don't blame you; after what I've done it's understandable. All I ask is that you give me this chance; a chance to make James proud of me..."

"What about Josie?"

Mary looked down,

"I'm not going to force her. If she doesn't want to know then that's her decision; if she does then I'm here for her. There is nothing to be gained by being pushy, though I don't want her to hate the triplets because of who their dad is."

Hermione nodded,

"Alright...."

"I'll do anything to prove my loyalty..."

"It's not that..."

"What? Tell me?"

Hermione sat down heavily on a nearby armchair.

“It’s a report I’ve just got from...a source.”

“What does it say?”

“Voldemort’s at Hogwarts. From what I’ve heard he’s found out about...” Hermione stopped herself saying the word Horcrux. Just because Mary said she was loyal didn’t mean she couldn’t revert, “...about something important and he’s furious. Going to hurt some of the kids...half bloods and blood traitors he says.”

“Are you going to go in?”

Hermione sighed and looked up at Mary, and pointed her wand in the latter’s face.

“Before I tell you any more I want you to take the unbreakable vow. Now. To ensure your loyalty...”

Mary just stared at her before nodding,

“We’ll need a bonder...”

Hermione sighed in frustration, got up and opened the door.

“Terry...come here, I need you for something.” Her voice betrayed how tense and edgy she felt.

“What?”

Terry Boot entered the room,

“Mary wants to join up, and she has agreed to take the unbreakable vow to ensure her loyalty. We need you to act as bonder.”

Terry’s face registered his surprise but he took his wand out of his pocket all the same. Placing her hand palm to palm with Mary’s hand Hermione watched as Terry pointed his wand at their joined hands.

“Do you, Mary White, promise to stay loyal to Dumbledore’s army and to keep our secrets to the grave; revealing them to no one on the other side?”

“I do.”

A flash of red light snaked out of the wand and wrapped itself around the hands

“And do you promise, if it becomes necessary, to die for our cause and to give any information you might have to me and no one else?” Mary’s hand twitched, but she didn’t pull away

“I do.”

A second flame of red light entwined itself around the hands, sinking in with the first creating a sort of half done chain.

“And do you also promise that you will never go back to William White or any other death eaters or anything connected with Voldemort?”

“I do.” Her tone was firm and final and the final burst of red flame wrapped itself securely round the other two creating a burning red chain interlocking the two hands.

The chain faded away after a few minutes and Hermione took her hand away,

“I hope you understand why I had to do that Mary?”

Marr nodded and Hermione turned to a very shocked Terry.

“Terry if you would be so kind as to bring everyone in here. I think the time has come to fight Voldemort head on. Bring everyone, and I mean everyone even if they are not active and that includes Neville, in here and I’ll announce our new recruit as well as the brief. Oh, and tell them to bring wands”

Terry, who had gone a ghastly pale at Hermione's implications nodded and hurried out.

"The triplets?" Mary asked, suddenly alarmed, "They'll be alone..."

"No they won't. Josie and Hugo will be staying behind to baby sit."

"You said everyone..."

"I need people back here and I need people to come with me. If they are over sixteen then they can fight. Josie and Hugo aren't. I made a mistake with Adonia and she died as a result. I won't allow my only son and Josie to be the victims of what may prove to be a fatal mistake..."

"But you have no time to plan..."

"Voldemort is at Hogwarts now, screaming for blood," Hermione informed her as the first people came in, "and I have just found out. I don't want to waste any more time than necessary..."

"But he could kill the whole student body within minutes..."

"Hardly! He likes the cat and mouse game; play with them before killing them. It's how his sick twisted mind works."

The room was now full and after looking round Hermione placed a Sonorous charm on her voice and spoke up,

"Quiet! Now, I'll make this short: Mary here has joined us in fighting. She has taken the unbreakable vow and that is all you need to know. The next thing is Voldemort is at Hogwarts; ready to create a blood bath as he has found out something...now is the time we have been waiting for. Now, we fight!"

Murmurs had been going on as Hermione spoke and Mary was worried they wouldn't believe her or follow her but none of them took their eyes off Hermione.

“If you are sixteen or above you may come with us. . Michael, I’ll need you to go to the ministry and contact our source there to tip off any recruits he’s made and to spread the word.”

To Mary’s surprise Michael nodded, looking grim before leaving the room, people making way for him.

“Now partner up. Pick up the nearest thing on the floor and I’ll come round and turn it into a portkey...not you Hugo; you and Josie are staying here and THAT IS ALL I HAVE TO SAY ON THE MATTER!” she raised her voice when it looked like both teenagers were going to argue. Both glared mutinously at her. “Now, pick up something and I’ll come round. When you reach the destination wait for me, alright? Don’t move until we are all together.”

There was a massive noise of scrabbling as people got into fives and held onto an object as Hermione came round, activating them with her wand. Gradually people disappeared until only Mary, Hermione, Neville, Josie and Hugo were left with the triplets in a makeshift play pen.

“I want to come!” Josie insisted.

“You need us. You need as many people as possible...” Hugo argued.

“What I don’t need Hugo is two teenagers who might end up dead. You are staying here with the triplets and that is that.”

“Neville!” Josie turned towards Neville who was staring intently at Hermione, a strange glint in his eye.

“You say you’re recruiting. Is there room for one more?” he asked quietly. Hermione herself just stared at Neville before breaking into a massive smile,

“Oh Neville, I knew you’d come around...”

“How come he gets to go but we don’t? We’re more active than he’s been this past year! Josie flared up

“Because young lady, you are under sixteen,” Mary cut in.

“Oh shut up. Why don’t you do us all a favour and go and die somewhere,” Josie snarled, vindictiveness in every line of her body as she stared at the person who had caused so much hurt in her life but was now being given a chance by Hermione. A chance she didn’t deserve.

“Josie that is enough; I don’t have time to deal with this. Here Mary, Neville, hold this.” She gave them a toy which belonged to the triplets. Pointing her wand at the object she said “Portus”

The toy glowed blue and in the last three seconds Mary turned round to Josie and said,

“I love you.”

Then they were gone, leaving two very pissed off teenagers and three babies alone in Sanctuary as they went off to fight the Darkest Lord that had ever been seen.

Wow this chapter just wrote itself. Review and tell me what you think. I’ll be updating a lot quicker now I’ve got to this point. Thanks guys xx

Josie, Hugo and the triplets sat in the kitchen; the first two playing with the food the house elves had made for them as both glared at the plates in an angry silence. As for the triplets they were on the floor being played with by one of the house elves, Jaza Josie thought her name was.

“You can keep them if you want,” Josie remarked to the elf, sourly, as Jaza ticked Jessica’s stomach.

“I like babies Miss Josie. Jaza had babies once...but they was taken away from her before Jaza was brought here. Jaza never knew what happened to her babies’ Miss which is why Jaza likes Mistress Mary’s babies...”

Josie just settled for a mutinous glare at the reference. Jaza continued,

“Mistress Mary does care about Miss Josie, even if Miss Josie doesn’t believe it. Jaza can tell a mother’s love anywhere...” Jaza said sternly, looking up at Josie who just stormed out, Hugo following her to her room.

Once they were in the room with the door shut Josie screamed into her pillow as she remembered her mother’s parting words to her. That woman was a lying, malicious, scheming, poor excuse for a woman. She should have been in Slytherin, Josie thought. It would have suited her personality better.

“I take it you’re not fussed by the triplets then?” Hugo asked once the angry flush on Josie’s cheeks had died down.

Josie let out a growl in her throat.

“They are her kids, why doesn’t she look after them. Oh yes, that’s right: because she doesn’t care regardless of what she says and does...”

“Well,” Hugo stated slyly with a crafty look on his face, “Jaza seemed more than happy to look after them...I mean she said it herself, she loves babies...”

Josie sat up from her position on the bed and looked at Hugo and carried on,

“So we should give her a chance to look after the babies as her own were taken away from her...”

“Exactly! And as we are doing this very selfless kind act towards Jaza that leaves us with nothing to do...” Hugo ventured.

“Yeah! I mean, we could really be of use to Hermione now we have nothing to do, right?”

“Of course!” Hugo replied with a huge amount of enthusiasm, “Because when you really look at it there might be more blood purists there than the DA and TA put together so...”

“So the more help they have the more likely we’ll win. I mean, Hermione will thank us later on for it,” Josie finished, her good mood restored

“Of course mum will thank us. She never really wanted us to stay behind. If she had known about Jaza then...”

“Then she would have let her look after them and let us come...”

“So really Josie; we’re doing everyone a favour here,” Hugo concluded.

Josie grinned at him before a problem presented itself.

“How are we going to get there?” Hugo’s face fell and he looked down studying his hands,

“I dunno...” he answered. Neither of them knew how to apperate, having always gone side long apparition; Portkeys maybe...

“ Well,” Josie said, suddenly taking control of the situation (something she had taken to doing after Adonia’s death), “we could make a Portkey I suppose...”

“How do you do that? Make em I mean?” Hugo asked. Josie had no idea to be honest; but, she supposed, there had to be a book on Portkeys somewhere. She said as much to Hugo.

“I’ll look in mum’s room. You look in the lounge and if one of us finds something we’ll come and find the other...”

“Alright,” Josie answered, happy now they were actually doing something. Taking the route to the lounge Josie walked in and immediately headed for the bookcase in the corner which Hermione had donated. Even after everything she had gone through her love for books never faltered.

In the end though, it was Hugo who found the book which was labelled MAGICAL TRANSPORTATION THEORY.

“ Lets see...Portkeys...Portkeys...here we are,” Josie muttered, pointing to a small paragraph. Both teenagers leaned over to read the small print.

“Portkeys are made by the incantation ‘Portus’. The castor should point his or her wand at the object which is to become a portkey, usually an ordinary object which is easily overlooked by many, and concentrate hard on the destination where they wish to go before casting the spell. The portkey should turn a glowing blue before returning to normal. If the portkey doesn’t turn blue then the spell hasn’t worked. Beginners may need an experienced wizard or witch to perform this spell as it is very advanced.”

“ That’s it?” Hugo asked, disgusted by the small amount of information. Apparition had a whole chapter dedicated to it.

“It’s enough. Now quick, find me a sock or something.” Hugo looked round the room which had been emptied by his mother half an hour earlier before spotting a discarded mug in the corner with coffee stains round the bottom.

“This alright?”

“Should be,” Josie answered and took the cup, re-read the paragraph, and, concentrating hard on her destination, pointing the wand at the cup and said clearly,

“Portus.” Unable to help herself she opened one eye and looking at the cup. Nothing happened.

“We could get an elf to do it?” Hugo said.

“They’ll probably be under strict instruction not to let us leave,” Josie muttered, “We can’t rely on anyone but ourselves.”

Then, closing her eyes and picturing Gryffindor tower common room in her mind she held onto the image before pointing her wand at the mug and saying, clear as crystal again,

“Portus!”

“Let me try,” Hugo cut in, snatching the cup off Josie and ignoring her glare.

“Portus!” Hugo cried, his eyes closed and his face scrunched up in concentration. Any angry words Josie was about to utter were cut off as the cup suddenly went a bright blue.

“Bloody hell!” Hugo said in awe, repeating his father’s favourite catch phrase unknowingly.

“Quick!” Josie snapped, putting her hand on the cup. Hugo just put his finger on it in time; the room in-front of them spinned and

disappeared as Josie felt herself being flung forwards in darkness, feeling Hugo next to her.

Hermione sneaked along one of the many corridors with Neville, Mary and Terry behind her. The other members had taken different routes, all in groups so they could surprise any teacher or prefect that might be patrolling. Up until now, though, they hadn't come across anyone which led Hermione to believe they were all down in the hall.

Coming up to the grand staircase Hermione saw many DA members already at the bottom, hidden in the shadows staring at the great doors that brought so many memories back to Hermione: good and bad.

Creeping up to them Hermione waited until they were joined by everyone else before Lavender voiced the question everyone else had been thinking,

"How do we do this?" Hermione was about to respond when a sharp loud gasp from inside the hall came along with cries of 'Josie!' Hermione's first thought was: she didn't. Her second thought was: I'm going to kill her and her third thought was: what is going on.

The reason she thought her third thought was because silence had descended into the hall and then Voldemort's voice, high and crystal clear, came floating out,

"Well then, two volunteers to go first: a blood traitor and a mongrel. How fitting." Next to Hermione Neville gripped his wand tightly, his blood boiling as he heard the voice that had caused him so much pain; the voice which belonged to the most foulest man on earth and in that instant, as memories and names and faces swam through his mind, Neville wanted to kill him.

Without giving a thought to his own safety or what he was doing Neville broke away from the group, ignoring Hermione's hisses for him to come back and strode into the hall his wand out in front of him.

“Leave her alone!” Hundreds of eyes swivelled towards him as his voice boomed round the hall and Neville felt his resolve harden as he gazed upon the snake like man in Dumbledore’s chair.

As his voice echoed away time seemed to stand still as the death eaters, Voldemort and the student body tried to get over the shock of someone just walking into Hogwarts and into the great hall in a very suicidal manner. However, before they could do anything the doors burst open and the whole of the DA swarmed in, spells flying everywhere.

It was chaos and Josie watched as Hermione engaged herself in a battle with Dolohov and Rodolphus Lestrange; Ernie had taken on Selwyn and Avery and Hannah and Lavender were each battling a Carrow. That was as far as she could see from her place on the floor in the middle of the hall where she had fallen, along with Hugo when the portkey arrived at the destination Hugo had picked. Aside from that, students were either engaging in battle with teachers or Slytherins or running about in a chaotic manner.

Josie dragged Hugo up and both ran through the battle scene as the fighting left the hall and journeyed outside into the reception area.

A body fell in front of her but Josie didn’t stop as she had seen Voldemort up ahead pressing a long thin oak wand to the dark mark engraved on Rabastan Lestrange’s arm.

The sounds of screaming and yelling filled her ears as the smell of smoke assaulted her nostrils as she pushed on towards Voldemort...but she stopped as dark mist flew through the air and materialized in the form of more death eaters.

Most students had now realised that they had to fight as there was no getting away from the fight so with the extra death eaters that had just arrived they were more or less matched if slightly outnumbered.

“Well, well, look who it is: the little mongrel half-blood.” Josie stopped in her tracks and deflected a spell sent from the towering

figure in front of her, recognising the voice behind the mask as the man she hated most in the whole world.

Suddenly engaged in the heat of the battle with White, defending herself and attacking Josie found the rest of the battle was insignificant at the moment. This was a kill or be killed situation as White was duelling to kill and to give attention to anyone else would be suicide. Focusing her attention on the man in front of her she didn't realise she had lost Hugo in the crowd until she heard a cry,

“GET AWAY FROM MY DAUGHTER!”

In that instant Mary joined Josie; fighting White, who just laughed in her face.

“A blood traitor and a mongrel; how fitting that I should kill you together. If I wasn't so amused at the pathetic attempt I'd be insulted.” The spells came faster and with more accuracy which led Josie to believe White had been toying with her before. Putting personal feelings aside she stood next to her mother and fought William. Even though there were two on one William was merciless with his magic and didn't hold back; giving him the advantage. Though what he hadn't counted on was Mary's vast knowledge of spells. She hadn't been placed in Ravenclaw for nothing.

“STUPIFY!”

“AVADA KEDAVRA!”

The two spells met in mid air and created an explosion above, bringing down chunks of stone from the ceiling. Dust rose up, clouding Josie's vision though the sounds of the battle still raged around her.

Once the dust had passed Josie first heard William laugh and looked down saw her mother lying on the floor, her eyes closed and a small trickle of blood running down her temple. The only sign that she wasn't dead was a small pulse in her neck. Although she didn't like her mother, to an extent didn't love her, Josie was still furious that

William would kill the mother of his children; she was even more incensed by William's next words.

"First your dad, now your filthy mother...just you and I'll have killed a whole family!" Then he laughed: a high insane chilling noise.

In that moment Josie didn't care about personal feelings, about anything. All she wanted to do was kill William, kill all the death eaters her anger was so raw. Her emotion gave her for the second time, advantage and William growled as he took a step back in the face on her onslaught. Then, taking a deep breath and calling on all the hate in her; the hatred for herself that she had had ever since she was a child, the hatred for her mother's neglect; her hatred for the death eaters and finally for the man in front of her. The hate inside her felt so strong, so consuming that she screamed with all her might,

"ADAVA KEDAVRA!"

The flash of green light was blinding and in that moment when the light faded Josie watched as the man who had caused her so much grief fell to the floor, dead.

Turning to her mother she checked she was alive before running off to aid Hannah in the great hall who seemed to be losing against Amycus.

"Stupefy!" Amycus went down like a ton of bricks and after a quick smile at Josie, Hannah turned to Lavender who, together, overpowered Alecto and like her brother fell like a ton of bricks as Lavender's well aimed body bind hit Alecto square in the chest.

Running through the battle Josie noticed new faces, faces she had never seen before, take on the raging death eaters. On one side of the hall, next to a pile of rubble, Hugo and an unknown man battled the Lestrange brothers; slowly overpowering them until Rabastan fled from the scene and Rodolphus went down as Hugo's stunner hit him.

Up on the dais in full swing was Hermione and Bellatrix. The ground below them glowed like molten lava and Josie knew both women

were duelling to the death. Next to them was Neville, who was locked in a serious combat with Voldemort. Looking at him Josie couldn't believe this was the same Neville who had preached against fighting. This Neville looked like he was born to fight!

Trevor was fighting Avery with Ellen by his side near the doors as Josie looked around, though they were losing slowly as Avery tired them out. Pointing her wand at her ex teacher Josie ran towards them and sent a Crucio his way; and watched with satisfaction as he flew through the air, banging his head on the wall and lying still; out cold.

“Thanks Jose,” Trevor called before disappearing in the crowd with Ellen by her side.

Sending various stunners and Body binds towards the death eaters Josie didn't see the stunner until it came too late and she fell to the ground.

Hugo turned round and saw his friend drop to the ground. Presuming she was dead he screamed with a deep agony and turned towards the death eater who had cast the charm and entered in an intense duel with him. The mask slipped revealing Lucius Malfoy who sneered down at the boy while making some cutting motions with his wand.

“Protego!” Something cold and sharp cut through his chest though it had no lasting damage that Hugo could feel.

Fighting with a renewed passion, Hugo with the aid of another wizard who had helped him overcome the Lestrange brothers, joined in and after a few minute of intense battle as the screams and shouts echoed round Hugo's head yelled,

“AVADA KEDAVRA!” Lucius Malfoy's body did a funny flip before falling onto the floor dead.

“Thanks,” Hugo breathed, out of breath as the smell of smoke became stronger.

“Don’t mention it,” the wizard grinned before disappearing into the crowd.

Hugo then ran towards Josie and kneeled down to take a look at her, his relief knowing no bounds as he realised she was only stunned.

“Enervate!” Josie’s eyes fluttered open.

“Come on.” Dragging her up Hugo pulled her up and ran towards an upturned table and hid behind it; both of them breathing heavily as more stone came raining down upon the hall. In front of them, a death eater was firing random dark spells everywhere, making the ceiling collapse; therefore making stone and pieces of furniture rain from the ceiling.

As the last of the crash drifted away Josie looked over the table to see five death eaters and two of students had gone down under the avalanche.

“You filthy mudblood! I’ll gladly send you to see your husband soon. Then what will poor baby Hugo do, hmm, without mummy?” Bellatrix’s taunting baby voice carried over the shouts and screams of the battle. Hermione didn’t reply, her bushy hair plastered to her head from sweat and her face flushed with anger and heat she had the look of a woman who wasn’t afraid to kill. Opposite her Bellatrix’s face was alight with madness as her coal black hair stuck out at odd angles. Letting out a mad high laugh Hermione took the opportunity to send the killing curse Bellatrix’s way.

Hitting her in the chest Bellatrix flew into the air spectacularly where she fell, sprawled onto a large piece of stone which looked like it had been the head of one of the massive stone gargoyles which had fallen, from the looks of the hole in the ceiling, five floors up. The head had a massive horn protruding from it’s partially smashed head, making Josie wonder if it was in fact a stone unicorn; and it was onto the horn that Bellatrix fell square on. Josie winced and closed her eyes as the horn pierced right through her ex transfiguration teacher. If she hadn’t been dead before she certainly was now.

Voldemort seemed not to have noticed Bellatrix's death as he stared with his red eyes at Neville. Neville seemed to be tiring and Josie saw what was coming as Voldemort raised his wand high above his head.

Running from the cover of the table she pushed and shoved people out of the way, yelling

“ NOOOOOOOOOOO!” as Voldemort seemed posed to strike Neville down where he stood.

Distracted by the yell towards him; Voldemort, who wasn't known for learning from his mistakes, snapped his attention towards her; and Neville, seeing this un-missable opportunity, yelled the killing curse with so much inner agony and hate it stopped Josie in her tracks. Time seemed to slow down until it stopped completely, and Neville and everyone else watched as Voldemort was blasted from his feet across the hall and heads of fighting students before falling with a horrible crunch onto the floor, stunning and successfully silencing the whole battle as the Darkest Lord in over a century fell to the man who could have been marked as Voldemort's equal thirty one years ago.

Although this wasn't as long as the other chapters I'm pacing the next few chapters out rather than cram them into one: Partly because I'm enjoying the story so much and partly because I'm feeling in a very evil mood which is why I'm leaving you here. I'll probably update Friday, Saturday at the latest. Anyway, tahnks guys and please review. Thanks. Xx

Josie and what seemed like the whole world seemed suspended in time as Voldemort's body did a funny dramatic flip and lay still; his red eyes staring up to the ceiling. Death eaters and opposition alike just stood, their wands suspended either in the air or by their side as they watched Voldemort's body; waiting for it to move or to do, well, something! After all, this was the darkest lord in over a century...had he really been killed?

Neville himself stood opposite the corpse, panting heavily as he glared at the fallen body of the mad man who had killed or ordered the killing of most of the people he loved. Part of him knew Voldemort was dead, another part wasn't so sure. After all, he had meant to be dead after Harry had supposedly finished him...but he had horcruxes then, he didn't now. So he had to be dead, Neville decided uneasily; wishing he believed it more.

After five minutes of solid silent staring everyone seemed, simultaneously, to snap back into action and the hall was filled with roars of outrage and pounding footsteps by the death eaters who, without a master to guide them, felt lost and whose first instinct was to run. Other sounds came from the opposition who sent stunners, body-binds or ropes out of the ends of the wands to prevent the death eaters from escaping punishment for the horrors that they had inflicted on people whether magical or muggle.

Josie stunned a dizzy looking Rabastan Lestrange before realising that the hall was filled with people cheering madly, hugging each other; as Josie looked she realised there wasn't a dry eye in the house. It was only when Hugo came up to her and hugged her that she realised that she was crying too.

“Where are the other death eaters?” she asked

“Either tied up,” he indicated a bunch of either unconscious or glaring death eaters in the corner who seemed to be tied up with an invisible rope, “Or they've ran...cowards,” he added venomously

The next hour was spent herding the death eaters to the dungeons, removing the corpses of Voldemort and the fallen death eaters and

lining up their own dead as well as reviving stunned comrades. Josie deliberately avoided her mother as she walked up and down the line of the dead, silently honouring them all. In total forty five had died, the most obvious one being Ernie.

Josie stared at his figure for a few minutes before walking over and softly closing his eyelids and muttering a quick prayer over him. Ernie had been a good friend to her and his death his especially close to home, though as she was shattered the death didn't nearly seem as bad as it felt. The next day would be the hardest, Josie knew, as tomorrow they would have to start rebuilding the whole wizarding world and Hogwarts. Regaining trust in the muggles who were probably now being let out of the camps and reunited would be especially hard. Nothing in life was easy though, Josie mused, and there were sacrifices. But sometimes sacrifices helped gain the desired result. A hand on her shoulder broke her out of her trance and Josie looked up to see Trevor, Ellen, Jamie and Hugo there, smiling down at her. All around them people were sitting at tables, happy; Happy for the first time in their lives, or, depending on their age, for what seemed like a long time.

Standing up Josie suddenly felt very tired as everything came crashing back down on her. Stumbling towards the nearest seat she sank down gratefully, allowing herself to rest her head on her arms on the table. Within minutes she was asleep. Josie vaguely remembered someone pick her up and carry her up, up, up until...was that the fat lady? The person holding her spoke the password and the portrait swung open, revealing the warm common room lying undisturbed beyond.

“You take her Hermione. I'll be waiting here for you.”

Josie felt herself being passed into someone else's arms and taken upstairs where she was laid on a very comfy bed. Lying down and allowing herself to fall deeply asleep. Her last thought before she fell asleep was how they had all done what she had set out to do: to avenge Jason and free the wizarding world.

Downstairs Hermione found Neville by the fire, staring into the flames.

“You okay?” she asked quietly.

“Yeah...well I knew some of us wouldn’t make it through...” his voice was sad as he thought on the dead: Ernie, Hannah, and Terry being only a few. The others were students mostly though not all of them had been named.

“I think Josie will be okay you know. She’ll make it through, despite killing White...”

“She’s tough...like her dad,” Neville observed.

Hermione slumped down into a spare chair next to Neville who suddenly looked twenty years older than he actually was.

“Well, well; what about you though. Killing Voldemort; the next Harry Potter,” Hermione tried feebly at a joke. Neville smiled despite himself.

“Yeah...you know, I really feel we should be happy at winning and to an extent I am but...”

“It’s difficult to feel happiness when you haven’t been happy for a long time,” Hermione finished.

Neville nodded before grinning at her,

“But you haven’t spoken about your own fame...killing Bellatrix Lestrange...”

“She was a bitch; she had it coming,” Hermione declared matter of fact.

“True.”

Both sat there in comfortable silence for the next half hour until Neville said,

“It’s going to be a big job, you know; rebuilding the world...”

“Yeah, but you have to start somewhere...the mistrust was mostly based from reading about Voldemort; if they read about how we got rid of him...well it's a long shot but hopefully people will come round; realise not all wizards are like that. If we extend the hand of friendship...or, does that sound too naive?” Hermione asked.

“Worth a try.” Neville gave a huge yawn,

“I think I'll go to bed. Long day tomorrow.”

Hermione nodded and watched as her friend made his way up to the boy's dormitory. Sighing she made her own way up to Josie's dormitory, deciding that Josie wouldn't mind if she slept in Adonia's bed.

Sunlight woke Josie up the next morning though she was reluctant to wake up; Waking up meant that she would have to face the mess that the death eaters had left behind. Better to stay in bed for five more minutes. Five more minutes turned into two hours when Josie fell back to sleep; and this time, when she woke up she felt more energized and, dragging herself up, realised she had slept in her clothes and that she badly needed a shower.

Walking into the bathroom Josie stood under a steaming hot shower until the water ran cold before stepping out and towelling herself dry she saw that someone had dropped off some clean clothes. Dragging the T-shirt and jeans on she padded barefoot down towards the great hall.

Walking into the great hall she was suddenly hit by how loud it was; people from all houses sitting at any table regardless of house. Sitting down at the Hufflepuff table next to Trevor she smiled at him who smiled back.

Looking round she was surprised to see huge plateful's of food around her. Not one to question her luck Josie helped herself to some of everything.

“You okay Josie?”

“No, but I’ll be fine.”

Trevor hesitated then came out with it,

“Your mum was looking for you earlier...”

“Why?” Josie’s voice was harsh.

“She...she said she needed to tell you something.”

“Well she can sod off...”

“Josie,” Josie turned round to see Neville standing behind her, “can you spare a few minutes once you’re done?”

“Yeah, sure.” Neville smiled at her before being swept away by another load of people who wanted to congratulate him and talk to him.

Josie speeded up in eating her breakfast before saying goodbye to Trevor and going off to find Neville. She found him outside near the old disused greenhouses.

“I used to love Herbology,” he said as she came up; looking at the old smashed greenhouse, “It was my best subject...” he trailed off as he remembered where he was.

“Come on. There’s someone who wants to speak to you...” Neville started off and Josie followed before Trevor’s words came back to her and, suddenly, she knew who wanted to see her. Problem was Josie didn’t want to speak to her.

“I’m not speaking to her!” Josie insisted, stopping mid stride and crossing her arms over her chest. Neville stopped a few strides in front of her and studied the girl. Regardless of what people thought Neville Longbottom could be as stubborn as Josie herself, if not

more; and Josie really did need to straighten things out with her mum. If she didn't she would just end up filled with hatred and bitterness and those two qualities were a major factor in turning a wizard or witch bad. Not that Josie would go bad, just that he didn't want to leave anything to chance.

“I really think you should hear her out Josie...”

“No!”

Neville looked at her before taking two strides towards her, lifting her up and throwing the protesting girl over his broad shoulder before walking back towards the castle; completely disregarding Josie's protests.

“Let me down! Let me down, now! Neville, this is not funny...no, I'm not going to talk to her. NEVILLE!” The last was said in a frustrated scream, though Neville completely ignored her.

Walking into the castle people stopped and stared at the screaming girl, though no one stepped in. This was the guy who killed the dark lord; better not cross him despite how nice he was.

Walking into a disused dusty classroom Neville dumped Josie on the floor then, after placing a silencing charm on the door, stood with his back to it so Josie couldn't escape. Sitting up and glaring at him it took her a while to notice the other occupant in the room.

“Josie?”

“What do you want?” Josie snarled.

Mary stared at her, wondering how best to go about this. Making excuses wasn't an option so how could she approach the subject of how sorry she was?

“I messed up,” she started

“Yeah, you did.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Are you?”

“Yes Josie; I was a complete idiot; completely disregarding your father’s memory, thinking only of safety rather than what James would have wanted, I was...”

“A screwed up pureblood fanatic who loved money and power, more than me?” Josie offered. Mary hesitated before nodding. Josie stared at her: it took guts to admit that and if she did admit she was wrong...then maybe she meant it when she said she was sorry.

“You’ve got my attention,” she said slowly.

“Josie I would love to start again with you; for one more chance to prove to you how much I love you and your dad...just one.”

“And the triplets?”

“What about them?”

“Will they be living with you despite who their father was?”

Mary felt she had to be honest,

“Yes.” Josie just stared at her hands. Living with the White heirs was less than desirable, but if they were brought up without believing the pureblood propaganda then maybe...no, what was she saying? They were Whites and White’s were bad news...but then, wasn’t she sounding like the death eaters? Discriminating because of a child’s blood?

Josie stared at her hands, unsure before looking up at Neville as if wanting his opinion. In response Neville gave an encouraging nod.

Still staring at her hands Josie said,

“I suppose we could. Start again I mean.”

Daring a look up Josie saw that her mother was in tears, her hands clapped over her mouth.

“Oh Josie, thank you,” Mary whispered.

Josie just shrugged and got up to go. Neville didn’t move, merely nodded towards Mary who, Josie now saw, was standing staring at her with her arms out in an unsure way. Taking a deep breath and fighting down the fear of rejection she went over and gave her mother brief hug before leaving the room, Neville moving aside to let her pass: deciding to let it happen slowly rather than pushing her.

The rest of the day was spent clearing up Hogwarts and overseeing repairs. People came and went, helping and going off to do something else regarding the ministry and helping muggle borns, freeing the prisoners in Azkaban and in the muggle camps and taking them to Sanctuary to get healed physically, nutritionally and hopefully in the long run, mentally. Michael had been put up as Minister for Magic for the time being with Hermione as head mistress.

By dinner time most people had retired to the great hall for a chat to one another. Josie took this time to slip outside and down to the lake where she leaned back and watched the sky. The moon and the stars were unusually bright. She couldn’t remember a time when they had ever been this bright and she supposed that the weather had a kind of magic of its own.

She felt rather than saw someone sit down next to her,

“Heya.”

“Hello Josie. I heard about your mum.” Josie looked up at Hermione and smiled,

“Always straight to the point, right Hermione?” Hermione smiled and leaned back herself looking up at the stars.

“What’s going to happen regarding Hogwarts?”

“We’re going to fix it, obviously, then start it again. Night time courses for people who need to catch up, mainly muggle borns.”

“I take it that the curriculum will be changed?”

“Oh yes, most defiantly.”

Josie smiled and stared back up to the stars, thinking over the past year and everything she had overcome to get here.

“How are you though?”

“Better than this morning,” Josie answered honestly, “I’m trying not to think how I killed a man, regardless of who he was. I’m not looking forward to the triplets finding out I killed their dad.”

Hermione nodded understandingly.

“You have the rest of your life to look forward to. Killing White was a necessity regardless of how horrible it was. In war it is either you or them. So long as it is explained properly the triplets will understand.”

Josie just nodded and together they just lay there watching the stars which seemed to get brighter and brighter. It was around ten o’clock that Neville and Hugo joined them, each sitting down and staring up at the sky.

“It’s going to be alright, isn’t it?” Josie asked

“Hopefully,” Neville remarked, only to be slapped on his arm playfully by Hermione.

“No, I mean everything. Michael is already making headway abroad. He told me today that he had a meeting with the president of the US. If they can get a treaty signed then people will follow...hopefully.”

“Hopefully being the operative word,” Hugo joked only to be silenced by one look from his mother.

“Yes Josie, I think that if we do everything right then slowly; everything will work out...”

“But it’ll be hard?” Hugo chimed in and Hermione sighed,

“Yes Hugo, it will be hard. But we have made the first step. Voldemort’s death has gone global...and now we need to work at the mistrust. Hopefully everything will come together.”

Josie took this in while staring at the stars. One in particular seemed to shine brighter than others, directly over head; so far but so near it seemed. In that moment Josie felt strangely at peace with the world and when Hermione announced they should all go in otherwise risk getting a chill she obliged happily. It was the next day that really confirmed it though. Mary found Josie leaning against the wall of the castle, watching the sun rise.

When Josie didn’t say anything Mary leaned next to her and watched the sun come up, dying the sky blood red.

“Dad would be proud of me, wouldn’t he?”

“Yes Josie; James defiantly would be proud of you and what you have done.”

Josie looked at her mum, properly this time and saw her for who she was; a woman who had had her fair share of crap that the world regularly dished out and who had been the victim of circumstance. Startled by her new found maturity Josie turned back to the rising sun; relishing the feel of the heat on her skin as the last of the resentment and hatred and bitterness left her. If small miracles like reconciling with her mother could happen, Josie thought, then maybe

bigger miracles could happen in the world.

As the sun rose fully Josie and her mother walked back into the castle, holding hands as the sun rose high in the sky; burning brightly in a clear sky for the first time in years.

Thank guys. Anyway hope you've enjoyed this story as much as I've enjoyed writing it. Oh, and just coz it might be the end doesn't excuse you for not reviewing lol.

Jenny xx